



# LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT REFERENCE GUIDE

**TITLE:** School Procedures During Inclement Weather Conditions

**NUMBER:** REF-5706.2

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**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Reference Guide is to provide information for Local Districts (LD) and schools regarding the closure of school and curtailing specific activities during inclement weather.

**MAJOR CHANGES:** This Reference Guide replaces *Reference Guide REF-5706.1, School Procedures During Inclement Weather Conditions*, issued on January 24, 2014, and reflects current organizational structure and contact information.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** The following guidelines apply:

I. Background

The Los Angeles Unified School District encompasses a large geographic area. Inclement weather may impact some areas of the District to a greater extent than others. Schools can check local weather conditions through the National Weather Service at [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov). Access the local forecast by entering location information into the appropriate box in the left-hand column of the National Weather Service home page.

II. Procedures for Responding to Inclement Weather Conditions

The following is provided to assist administrators with District policy, procedures and information on responding to inclement weather conditions. When weather conditions become severe, District emergency personnel will:

- A. Hold students and staff in a safe location on campus, account for everyone on campus, and keep students, staff and parents informed.
- B. Review available data and make a recommendation to the LD Administrator of Operations about the school’s ability to safely continue the instructional program.

**ROUTING**  
Local District Superintendents  
Administrators of Operations  
Operations Coordinators  
Principals  
Non-School Site Administrators



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- C. Schools will receive notification and guidance from the District through Blackboard Connect, direct phone calls, and email messaging.
- D. Schools should also monitor local weather conditions using [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov) and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio, if available.
- E. Review the Safe School Plan Volume 2 for emergency management guidance.
- F. Consider postponing or cancelling field trips and/or athletic events.

### III. District Policy Regarding Closing Schools During Inclement Weather

Administrators are reminded that only the Superintendent of Schools may authorize the closure of any schools. The following Administrative regulations provide for implementation of Rule 2324 (c):

- A. Schools and offices will notify the appropriate LD Administrator of Operations or Division Head of any unsafe weather-related conditions.
- B. If conditions are such that the LD Administrator of Operations has deemed it appropriate to close a specific school or schools, the LD Administrator of Operations will contact the Office of the Superintendent of Schools for approval.
- C. During non-school hours, school information will be disseminated to the media through the Office of Communications regarding hazardous conditions. School closures and staff direction will be officially announced from the Superintendent's office at the following times:

5:30 AM – First school closure announcements

7:00 AM – Final deadline to make school closure announcements

Schools not officially closed by the Superintendent by the above times will open with staff reporting as usual.

- D. In the event that certificated and classified staff are unable to report to their respective job locations, they are directed to contact their immediate supervisor.
- E. The LAUSD Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be opened and staffed at the appropriate level to support the affected LDs and schools.



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- F. The LD Administrator of Operations will issue directions to all personnel regarding payment for days absent due to declared closures.
- G. It is understood that students are safer on school premises under the supervision of school staff than unsupervised. As such, consider every alternative course of action before initiating early dismissal.

#### IV. Weather-related Conditions Affecting the Los Angeles Unified School District

The NOAA issues advisories, watches, and warnings for a variety of potentially hazardous weather conditions. Possible weather-related conditions affecting the Los Angeles Unified School District include the following:

- A. Rain – can cause flooding even with relatively low amounts of rain, due to blocked storm drains and run-off conditions. Driving conditions are more dangerous and visibility is compromised. These conditions can affect school bus schedules, pedestrian routes to/from school and student drop-off and pick-up times and locations. Secure items on campus in danger of floating away and bring indoors any equipment that may become damaged or waterlogged. Lightning is possible in rain storm conditions. Avoid being next to standing water and metal objects in open areas. If lightning conditions are indicated, avoid taking shelter under very tall trees or structures. During or following heavy rains, site administrators are to cancel or reschedule field trips or extra-curricular trips to any area or venue that includes a stream or moving water. This includes trips to the Los Angeles River, LA City or County regional parks, beaches, or other outdoor venues.

Before every rainy season, school plant managers should be reminded to:

- Check all ground-level drains and drainage areas to make sure they are free of debris and work properly. Clogged drains should be reported for repair since they can cause flooding and building damage.
  - Inspect roof scuppers and drains to make sure they work properly.
  - Request sand bags and plastic sheeting from the operational area that can be used to divert water away from doors.
- B. Flood/Flash Flood - may accompany rain, or may appear suddenly as a result of storm conditions elsewhere in Southern California. During flood advisories or warnings, secure items on campus in danger of floating away and bring indoors any equipment that may become damaged or waterlogged. Bus schedules and commute times may be affected by flooding. No student should be allowed to go near fast-moving water or have access to an area where they could come in contact with swift water. No student should be allowed near fast-running creeks, streams, rivers, or flood channels, especially during or after heavy rains in any part of the Los Angeles area. As little as six inches of fast-moving water can knock an adult off their feet or move a car.



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- C. Hail – can damage buildings and equipment, and possibly injure students, depending on the size of the hail stones. Move fragile items indoors if possible. Hail may be accompanied by unusually cold weather. This may cause a higher chance of hypothermia with prolonged exposure, so keep students indoors and dry during hail, and monitor students who have been exposed.
- D. Wind – speeds have been measured in excess of 100 mph in Los Angeles, which can have devastating effects. High winds can knock down trees, utility lines and poles, and remove exterior building materials such as gutters and shingles that are not securely fastened. Traffic patterns can be affected due to debris and power outages. During periods of high winds, be prepared for a loss of power. Take proactive measures to secure or move objects that could be damaged or moved by winds. Review the loss of power section of the Safe School Plan Volume 2 – Emergency Procedures Section 5.13, *Loss or failure of Utilities*.
- E. Funnel Clouds – are possible in the Los Angeles area. If a funnel cloud is sighted or a tornado warning is issued, immediately move all students indoors. Where possible, have students take shelter in an interior hallway, away from windows and other sources of glass. Students should sit on the floor with their backs against the wall and protect their head and neck with their arms. Remain in position until an all-clear is sounded.
- F. Heat-related weather emergencies are covered in Bulletin 963.1, *Guidelines for Preventing Heat Stroke*.
- G. Tsunami – Several LAUSD schools on the Westside are located within the tsunami inundation zone. These schools have a tsunami annex as part of their Safe School Plan, and each school has been provided with a NOAA weather radio. Schools will receive Local District and District support if a school needs to relocate due to a tsunami warning.

### V. Categories of Hazardous Weather Alerts Issued by the National Weather Service

The National Weather Service issues three distinct categories of hazardous weather alerts, covering all manner of weather events.

- A. WATCH - used when the risk of a hazardous weather or hydrologic event has increased significantly, but its occurrence, location or timing is still uncertain. *A “watch” is intended to provide enough lead time to set emergency plans in motion. A watch means that hazardous weather is possible.* Schools should have a plan of action in case a storm threatens, and they should listen for later information and possible warnings especially when planning travel or outdoor activities.



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If a weather watch is issued, schools in the affected area should:

- Review the Safe School Plan and confirm staff assignments for emergency positions
- Review field trips and extracurricular activities
- Review Blackboard Connect emergency contact lists for staff and students
- Monitor local weather via [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov) and/or a NOAA weather radio
- Inspect the campus for conditions that could cause damage

B. **ADVISORY** - issued when a hazardous weather event is occurring, imminent or likely. *Advisories are for less serious conditions than warnings that cause significant inconvenience. If caution is not exercised, conditions could lead to situations that may threaten life or property.*

If a weather alert is issued, schools in the affected area should:

- Review the Safe School Plan
- Check emergency supplies
- Examine extracurricular activities, field trips, and after-school programs
- Plan for modified activity schedule
- Move outdoor equipment out of harm's way
- Monitor local weather via [www. weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov) and/or a NOAA weather radio
- Check school site for hazards and exposures that can be mitigated
- Send a Blackboard Connect message if extracurricular activities may be impacted

C. **WARNING** - issued when a hazardous weather or hydrologic event is occurring, imminent or likely. *A warning means weather conditions pose a threat to life or property. People in the path of the storm need to take protective action.*

- Activate Safe School Plan
- Stage emergency supplies in a location protected from weather
- Send Blackboard Connect message and update school website and school social media accounts to notify parents
- Notify Local District of actions
- Take proactive steps to protect students and staff
- Cancel activities, field trips and after-school programs if expedient to do so



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For all weather-related emergencies, check the condition and availability of school emergency supplies, especially working flashlights, rescue tools and first aid supplies. Power outages may occur in many types of adverse weather conditions. Be prepared for loss of electricity, including lighting and heating/air conditioning. Consider whether increased activity level (such as an athletic event) increases the effect of the weather condition on students, such as putting students at risk of hypothermia or heat stress. Always act to limit student exposure to hazardous conditions, including inclement weather.

### **RELATED RESOURCES:**

Safe School Plan, Volume 2 – Emergency Procedures

REF-5451.1, *School Site Emergency/Disaster Supplies*, dated April 12, 2013, issued by School Operations.

REF-5435.1, *NOAA Public Alert Radios*, dated January 24, 2014, issued by School Operations.

For training support, please see the STEPS web site at <http://achieve.lausd.net/steps>.

### **ASSISTANCE:**

For assistance or further information, please contact School Operations-Emergency Services at (213) 241-3889.