


CHAPTER: 8	SECTION: 13	SUBJECT: Environment of Care
TITLE: <b>Operation During Severe Weather</b>		
EFFECTIVE DATE: 12-15-95	REVIEWED/REVISED DATE: 07/22/98, 11/05/01, 12/7/04, 12/20/05, 2/28/06, 5/13/08, 2/14/11, 1/26/12, 3/25/13, 3/17/14, 3/17/15, 4/21/16, 4/20/17, 7/13/18	
ISSUED AND APPROVED BY:   EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR		

**I. PURPOSE:**

To define and describe operating procedures when weather is threatening and/or severe.

**II. APPLICATION:**

To all Community Mental Health of Ottawa County (CMHOC) directly operated programs.

**III. DEFINITIONS:**

Not applicable.

**IV. POLICY:**

It is the policy of Community Mental Health of Ottawa County (CMHOC) to provide services in a safe fashion at all times (even during severe weather) at the level and intensity needed by the individual.

**V. PROCEDURE:**

Each program may develop program specific guidelines that comply with the following procedures:

**A. GENERAL GUIDELINES:**

Whenever possible, the following guidelines will be followed regardless of the setting whenever possible:

- During **WATCHES** issued by the National Weather Service:
  - Voluntary, unnecessary outings out of doors will be cancelled.
  - Appropriate preventative measures will be taken to prepare for the possibility of a weather emergency (e.g. radio & flashlight will be located & assured to be operational, basic emergency supplies will be placed in appropriate locations)
  - Arrangements will be made to monitor weather reports issued by the National Weather Service (e.g. via television, NOAA radio, AM/FM radio, or internet)
  - Call tree will be implemented to assure all CMHOC sites are aware of condition. Call trees are program specific.
- During **WARNINGS** issued by the National Weather Service:
  - Immediate precautions will be taken (e.g. seek shelter)
  - CMHOC staff will respond pursuant to emergency plans

- The Executive Director, or his/her designee, has the authority to close programs as deemed necessary. Staff must report unless the County issues closure of any county buildings.

**B. CRISIS INTERVENTION SERVICES & ACT EMERGENCY SERVICES:**

This service is mandated to be available 24 hours per day and will not close regardless of inclement weather. Should the weather prohibit the professional from making face-to-face contact, appropriate referral(s) and consultation will be made over the phone.

**C. OUTPATIENT SERVICES/IN-HOME/CLS/ACT/SE:**

These services are scheduled to be offered at times convenient to the consumer. It is, however, inherent in risk management that the safety of staff and consumers be weighed against the benefits gained from the individual service. To this end, services will be open and available unless all county offices are closed by the Ottawa County Administrator. If the weather is threatening or dangerous, however, staff and consumers will be notified and encouraged to analyze their individual situation and use the general guidelines above as well as appropriate judgment to protect their health and well-being.

**VI. ATTACHMENT:**

None Applicable.

**VII. REFERENCE:**

The Michigan Department of Mental Health Standards for Community Mental Health Services, Administrative Rules, and CMHOC Call Tree.