



8 March,
2018

SWOSU Clarifies Policy Regarding Use of Campus Facilities as Public Storm Shelters

Southwestern Oklahoma State University reminds Weatherford residents to plan to seek shelter at home or in a personal shelter when tornadic conditions exist.

SWOSU has nearly 5,000 students on campus, and in the Weatherford area during most times of the year, its facilities cannot serve as public storm shelters.

“Our facilities were never intended to serve as public storm shelters,” said Kendra Brown, director of public safety at SWOSU. “Our severe weather shelter plans are in place to ensure the safety and security of our students, faculty and staff, a portion of which are working or living on campus 24-hours a day.”

During a 2017 storm in Weatherford, two areas—basement of the Al Harris Library and Old Science Building—were heavily packed with people. Some residents brought animals which resulted in some problems. SWOSU officials remind people who utilize the shelters that pets—unless they are service animals—are not allowed.

Brown said the recent experience led to a realization by administrators that the university should clarify its shelter policy to the public, as offering public shelter could lead to a number of challenges.

“People could get to campus and be unable to access campus shelters because they are full or not open if a storm occurs outside of normal business hours, plus they could put their lives at risk by getting into their vehicles and traveling to campus. We feel we are better serving our community by encouraging residents to plan where they will seek shelter now,” Brown said.

The university does have designated primary and alternate shelter areas for students, faculty and staff to utilize during severe weather, as well as plans to open specific shelters for on-campus residents should a storm occur outside of normal business hours.

Additional information about shelters is available at: <http://www.swosu.edu/administration/police/what-to-do/tornado.aspx>

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Weatherford Campus

100 Campus Drive
Weatherford, OK 73096

Sayre Campus

409 E Mississippi Ave
Sayre, OK 73662

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Current Students

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580.774.3111



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