Severe Weather Alert System
TTUHSC at the Permian Basin

PURPOSE:
The purpose of this attachment is to identify the procedures to be followed by TTUHSC at the Permian Basin to alert its employees of severe weather. The procedures identified in this attachment are intended to provide as much advance notice as possible to all individuals in the facilities. The procedures at the Permian Basin are keyed to the Medical Center Hospital - Odessa, Memorial Hospital and Medical Center - Midland.

REVIEW:
The Assistant Vice President for Fiscal Affairs, TTUHSC-Permian Basin, will review this attachment by February 1 of every fours years (E4Y), with recommendations for revisions forwarded to the TTUHSC Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration by February 15.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:
A. Monitoring - TTUHSC-Permian Basin has four weather monitoring methods. The primary method used in monitoring the development of severe weather is with the Texas Tech Police. Each of the members of the TT Police carries a radio that is in communication with the Odessa Police Department. Any time there is a severe weather condition developing, the Odessa Police Department will broadcast an alert over their radio network. The TT Police will then relay this alert to the TTUHSC switchboard for facility announcement.

Another method is with NOAA Weather Radio’s located with the School of Nursing, School of Allied Health, School of Medicine Dean’s Suite, and at the Reception Desk/Switchboard in the TTUHSC Lobby. These radios give the current weather condition on a continuous basis and automatically sound an alarm, which is broadcast by the Severe Weather Warning Service, whenever severe weather enters or develops in the county.

A third source of severe weather information that is communicated to TTUHSC-Permian Basin is with the Odessa Medical Center Hospital switchboard. The switchboard at Odessa Medical Center Hospital (MCH) is operated on a 24-hour basis and also has weather radios. When severe weather conditions develop, the switchboard operator at MCH will call the TTUHSC-Permian Basin switchboard operator for notification of the developing weather condition.

A fourth method used when there are any developing severe weather conditions is the Internet. By going to www.intellicast.com, the weather condition any place on earth or at the county level can been seen with radar imagery, cloud height and direction, wind speeds, amount of precipitation, icing conditions, etc. A designated level of scanning/screen on the Intellicast web site can be bookmarked which will create an immediate access path to that specific area weather screen without going through the usual access procedures. For TTUHSC-Permian Basin Safety Services, the web screen for weather radar broadcast from the Severe Storm Monitoring Station at the Midland Airport is bookmarked WTX. This screen will show the weather conditions for Ector, Midland and surrounding counties.

B. Severe Weather Contact - For TTUHSC-Permian Basin, the TT Police will make all decisions as to the response to developing weather conditions. The TT Police will coordinate all announcements through the TTUHSC switchboard operator.

C. Emergency Evacuation Plan - TTUHSC-Permian Basin has a Life/Safety Management Plan that describes all conditions of emergency evacuation that would involve staying in the building or exiting the building. Additionally MIHS and WIC have an Emergency/Disaster Plan that describes the emergency evacuation procedures for the rural clinics.

Each department shall design, publish and post an internal Emergency Evacuation Plan(s) in all physical areas controlled by the department. These plans will identify the route to be followed from a specific area in the department to both an exit from the building and to the nearest identified
Severe Weather Shelter Area. If any department, to include rural clinics, wishes assistance in the preparation of their Plans, contact the TTUHSC-Permian Basin Safety Services Office at 335-1820.

D. **Notification** - When an advisory, watch, or warning, which includes the geographic areas of TTUHSC-Permian Basin, is issued by the National Weather Service, the TT Police will notify the TTUHSC switchboard operator. The TT Police will coordinate all necessary announcements with the TTUHSC switchboard operator.

As a backup to the TT Police, the Safety Services Manager or Assistant Vice President for Fiscal Affairs and Administration will coordinate the necessary announcements with the TTUHSC switchboard operator.

The rural clinics will rely on the local community alarm systems or their own NOAA radios. At the Midland Memorial Hospital, the Security Department makes an announcement of developing severe weather when a tornado is imminent.

E. **Weather Statements** - The most prominent weather statement categories are severe weather watch, severe weather warning, and tornado emergency. Employee responses to each of these categories are given in detail in the TTUHSC Life/Safety Management Plan, Section 3-A and the MIHS and WIC Emergency/Disaster Plan, Section 3-A.

F. **Weather Statement Codes** - For TTUHSC-Permian Basin and Odessa Medical Center Hospital, the following codes are used:
- Code White - Severe Weather Watch
- Code Yellow - Severe Weather Warning
- Code Red - Severe Weather/Tornado Emergency

G. **Departmental Responsibilities** - Upon notification of a severe weather condition each department shall be responsible for immediately ensuring all patients, employees, students, and visitors are made aware of the situation. Departmental employees will keep all individuals in their department area calm and aware of what actions or procedures will be followed should weather conditions warrant further protective efforts. The Unit Safety Officer should check to be sure that all passageways are clear and unobstructed, should evacuation become necessary.

In the event a “Code Red” (indicating a tornado or severe weather has been sighted in our area) is announced, all employees should **IMMEDIATELY PROCEED TO THE NEAREST IDENTIFIED SEVERE WEATHER SHELTER AREA.** Employees shall assist and guide all patients and visitors to the Severe Weather Shelter Areas should a Code Red be declared and announced. In the event a patient cannot be moved to a shelter, the patient will be moved to the smallest and most central room on that floor. There the patient will be covered with extra blankets, pillows, etc. to maximize the protection of the patient.

H. **Severe Weather Assistance Team (SWAT)** - Personnel from the following departments shall be available to assist the TT Police, should the need arise, during severe weather alerts: Facilities, Operations and Maintenance, Safety Services, Computer Services, Human Resources, News and Publications, and the Assistant Vice President for Fiscal Affairs-RC. These individuals need to be available should the TT Police call for assistance.

I. **Change in or Cancellation of Codes** - The TT Police will contact all Unit Safety Officers and notify them of any change in the previously announced code. In the event a “Code Red” was declared, the TT Police, Unit Safety Officers, and members of the Severe Weather Assistance Team (SWAT) will come by the Severe Weather Shelter Areas to announce the cancellation of the “Code Red.”

J. **Assistance** - Any department needing assistance during incidents of severe weather should contact the TT Police at 335-5279. The TT Police will coordinate the responses to all requests.
K. **Non-TTUHSC Facilities** - Health care professionals working in the area hospitals will respond to the appropriate facilities’ severe warning system. The Midland Memorial Hospital, at present, has only one type of severe weather warning that is broadcast over their intercom system. This severe weather warning is **Tornado Imminent** and is only used when a tornado is in the vicinity.

L. **TTUHSC Rural Health Operations** - MIHS and WIC clinics located in the following locations will follow directions from their respective city police, county sheriff and/or fire department concerning severe weather conditions: Andrews, Crane, ECHD, Fort Stockton, Kermit, McCamey, Midland, Monahans, Odessa, Ozona, Pecos, and Stanton. Each rural clinic must be familiar with all possible public shelter locations in their area. The local Police Department or Chamber of Commerce will identify the designated public shelter areas.

It is recommended that each rural clinic or health care team have a NOAA Weather Radio to keep with them at each location. The senior person in each of these TTUHSC-Permian Basin facilities will notify their respective supervisors of any significant weather activity in their area as soon as reasonably possible.

A description of the severe weather conditions with appropriate response and emergency phone numbers are given in Section 3-A of the MIHS and WIC Emergency/Disaster Plan. During a severe weather warning, it is important to begin planning where the patients and employees will take shelter and to expect power surges and failures on equipment.