



## Adult Education Weather Policy

### Purpose

To protect the health and safety of students, instructors, and staff by providing clear, consistent guidelines for holding outdoor classes in varying weather and environmental conditions.

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### General Guidelines

- **Safety First:** The safety and well-being of all participants is our top priority when making weather-related decisions.
  - **Compounding Conditions:** Multiple moderate factors (e.g., heat and air quality) may collectively justify moving a class indoors for comfort or safety.
  - **Advance Notice:** When possible, decisions to relocate a class will be made based on the forecast available the day before and communicated by email to all registered participants.
  - **Environmental Conditions:** Factors such as wind exposure, time of day, morning dew, and available sun or shade are considered when deciding whether an outdoor class can proceed.
  - **Class Design:** We consider the intended format and goals of the class to ensure that outdoor conditions will still support class learning objectives.
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### Class Types & Weather Adjustments

Class Type	Description	Weather Policy
Outdoor-Optional	Classes that can be held either indoors or outdoors (e.g., Container Planting, Sound Meditation, Tai Chi)	Will be moved indoors in the case of moderate to severe weather.
Outdoor-Mandatory	Classes that must take place outdoors to meet their goals (e.g., Plant ID Walks, Gardening Techniques, Forest Bathing)	Hold outdoors unless conditions are unsafe. May be canceled or rescheduled if moving indoors is not feasible.

## Weather Metrics & Decision Guidelines We Use

### 1. Cold Weather & Wind Chill based on the [NOAA Wind Chill Chart](#)

- If the wind chill is 55 degrees Fahrenheit or cooler:
  - Outdoor-Optional classes will move indoors.
  - Outdoor-Mandatory classes will be evaluated based on compounding factors which align with the following Wind Chill Guidelines:

Wind Chill	Guidelines for Outdoor-Mandatory Classes
32°F to 16°F	Limit time outdoors; monitor for frostbite
15°F to 0°F	Max 30 minutes outside with frequent indoor breaks
Below 0°F	Class must be held indoors

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### 2. Air Quality Based on [AirNow \(Glencoe, IL\)](#)

AQI Level	Guidelines
0 – 100 (Good – Moderate)	Normal outdoor activities
101 – 150 (Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups)	Modify class: reduce intensity, add breaks, masks encouraged
151+ (Unhealthy or worse)	All classes must move indoors

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### 3. Heat Index Based on [NOAA Heat Index Chart](#)

Index Level	Guidelines
Yellow (Caution)	Proceed outdoors; drink water and seek shade
Light Orange (Extreme Caution)	Limit time outdoors; schedule breaks for water and shade
Dark Orange/Red (Danger/Extreme Danger)	All activities must be held indoors

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### 4. Lightning

- If lightning is detected within 8 miles of the Garden, outdoor classes must move indoors immediately.
- Wait at least 30 minutes after the last lightning or thunder before resuming outdoor activities.

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### 5. Rain or Snow

- If there is a 50 percent or greater chance of rain or snow:
  - Outdoor-Optional classes will move indoors.
  - Outdoor-Mandatory classes may be canceled or rescheduled unless precipitation is expected to be very light.

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**6. Wind & Class Materials**

- Classes using lightweight or wind-sensitive materials may be relocated based on wind conditions.

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**7. Horticultural Needs**

- If a garden area designated for class becomes temporarily unavailable due to weather-related maintenance or care needs, we will seek an alternative outdoor location. If none is available, the class will be moved indoors.

*Updated 9/23/2025*