Reminder of Inclement Weather Procedures

As the temperature drops, the Office of Emergency Management and Safety would like to remind the NOVA community of the College’s inclement weather procedures. If the College is going to be closed, a text alert will be sent to cell phones registered with NOVA Alert, a notice will be posted on the home page of the College’s website, and major local media outlets will broadcast the closing information. If the College closes early due to inclement weather, an email will also be sent out to all faculty, staff, and students with the closing time.

If the College closes early due to inclement weather, faculty, staff, and students will be provided with specific departure times. This will help to ensure a safe and orderly egress from buildings and campuses. An example of a message you may see is:

NOVA classes and activities will end for students at X:XX p.m. due to inclement weather. Faculty and administrative offices will close at X:XX p.m. The College will provide updates, if needed, via NOVA Alert and or the website.

Here is some additional information you need to know about college operations during inclement weather:

- If the College opens late, exterior doors will not be opened until an hour before the announced opening time. Please do not ask police to unlock buildings ahead of time; they are not authorized to do so.
- If the College closes early, doors will be locked one hour after the announced closing time. You should leave the campus immediately but in no case later than the time specified in the departure message as illustrated above. For safety reasons, described below, you will not be permitted to remain in the buildings.
- When the College is closed, only designated essential personnel are allowed on campus for safety reasons. Reduced manning of police and OEMS personnel, combined with the risks inherent in inclement weather, make it difficult for us to ensure your safety.

For more details on the College’s inclement weather procedures as well as a listing of the media outlets that will carry the College’s closing and delay information, please go to the Office of Emergency Management and Safety website at www.nvcc.edu/emergency. As a reminder, we ask that you do not contact Police Dispatch or the Office of Emergency Management and Safety for closing updates.
How Safe Are You?

The NOVA Police and Office of Emergency Management and Safety understand that the College’s academic mission cannot be achieved absent safe and secure campuses. This is one of many reasons we take your safety and security so seriously. We offer more than 20 free safety and security presentations (e.g., active shooter response, staying safe on campus and in the classroom, hazardous materials, bomb threat response, bystander intervention, gangs, drugs, crimes against women, etc.); we publish a monthly Public Safety Newsletter; we advocate the free LiveSafe mobile safety app, which is available free of charge at the police website (www.nvcc.edu/police); we work closely with the Women’s Center, Sexual Assault Services, and other college offices; we train relentlessly and share our expertise as instructors to recruits from over 80 agencies in two police academies; and we contribute articles regularly to the country’s leading journal on college policing.

As a result of these efforts, crime as NOVA has dropped precipitously in the last five years. College campuses, and NOVA campuses in particular, are safe; far safer in fact than in the surrounding communities at large. Consider these facts:

- 93% of violent crimes that victimize college students occur off campus.
- The probability of homicide at post-secondary institutions is extremely low: 0.07/100K people vs. 5.7/100K in US as a whole; and 14.1/100K in the 17-29 age group.

You are more likely to be assaulted off campus than on, and this raises an important question: how safe are you? The police are responders; they come after the offense. In short, you have a significant role in your safety.

Most crimes are crimes of opportunity. Predators look for vulnerable targets. Here are several tips to keep you safe, both on and off campus:

- Pay attention to your environment. Walk with your head up and scan all around you, to include what’s behind you.
- Never walk and text or text when you’re in a stopped car. It detracts from your ability to see what’s happening around you.
- Predators often work in groups. Beware of someone who engages you in conversation to distract you from the presence of his partner.
- Do not be ostentatious when out and about. A thief may target a well-coiffed woman with a designer handbag or a man with a Rolex watch and driving an expensive car before someone who doesn’t look like he or she will yield a big pay day.
- Burglars know that jewelry, cash, and other valuables are normally kept in the master bedroom. Hide your valuables elsewhere.
- Keep your information private, but limiting what you put on social media.

These tips only scratch the surface of personal safety.

Don’t be a victim. Stay aware, be confident and stay safe.
It Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time: Avoiding “Better” Living through Chemistry

Most law enforcement discussions about drugs address the widespread use of illegal drugs and their injurious effects. It is true that drug use is becoming increasingly widespread. Indeed, the drug culture has been popularized since the 1960s by music and mass media and now, drugs invade all aspects of society. Even older studies, such as a Centers for Disease Control 2007 study found that 45% of high school students drank alcohol and almost 20% smoked weed in a one-month period. Even if these numbers stayed constant, which they haven’t, the potency of marijuana is greater now than 10 years ago so its effects are more pernicious.

In the United States, some 200 to 300 new designer drugs were identified from 2009-2014. A majority of these products are manufactured in China, so the precise nature of ingredients is unknown. Many of these synthetic drugs, such as synthetic marijuana, known as K2, Spice, Scooby Snacks, and over 30 other names, are advertised as harmless. Some are sold over the internet as herbal incense or smoking blends or bath salts. These drugs are not harmless.

Spice and K2 are not marijuana. They are herbs sprayed with chemicals intended to simulate THC, the mind-altering ingredient found in marijuana. These ingredients are not safe or organic, and users do not know precisely what they are putting into their bodies. What we do know is that Spice and other synthetic drugs are dangerous, as seen in the following:

- Calls to poison control centers related to synthetic drugs in the US increased almost 80% from 2010-2012.
- In 2011, emergency room visits associated with synthetic marijuana increased 2.5 times, to almost 29,000.
- A Texas K2 dealer was linked to 120 overdoses in Austin and Dallas in one week.

The short- and long-term effects of these substances involve much more than increased appetites for brownies. Short-term effects on the mind include confusion, panic attacks, severe paranoia, delusions, hallucinations, and psychosis. Physical effects include heart attack, convulsions, seizures, strokes kidney injury and paralysis.

While on the subject of chemistry, be wary of non-prescribed prescription drugs. These marvels of modern medicine can be even riskier if abused than illegally manufactured drugs since their high potency creates a greater risk of addiction and overdose. There are four major types of abused prescription drugs: depressants (which lower brain function to make a person drowsy or reduce anxiety); opioid and morphine derivatives (such as OxyContin), which are used to relieve pain; stimulants which increase energy and alertness but also increase blood pressure and heart rate; and psychiatric antidepressants intended to reduce depressions.

Taken without adequate regulation and supervision, these drugs are dangerous threats to life. Of the 1.4 million drug related ER admissions in 2005, almost half were associated with the abuse of pharmaceuticals. Depressants, opioids and antidepressants are responsible for more overdose deaths (45%) than cocaine, heroin, methamphetamines, and amphetamines (39%) combined. Unfortunately, almost 50% of teens surveyed believe prescription drugs are safer than illegal street drugs, and 60-70% of the respondents say they get their drugs from their home medicine cabinets. If you have prescription drugs at home, guard them from potential abuse by others.

Here at NOVA, you are making a worthwhile investment in your life. Don’t throw it away to fit in, to relieve boredom, to escape or relax, to rebel, to experiment, or to seem grown up. You don’t need it.

For more information about the pernicious effects of these and other drugs, visit www.drugfreeworld.org or phone 1-888-668-6378 (NO TO DRUGS).
Emergency Procedures - Fire

NOVA takes your safety seriously. Toward this end, the College has produced a series of short safety videos. The link to the fire response video provides information that can save your life—https://vod02.nvcc.edu/Watch/k7HRb3a8.

In the event of a fire,
- Activate the nearest fire alarm
- Call 911 if possible
- Knock on doors and yell “fire” as you exit the building
- DO NOT use elevators!
- Feel closed doors with the back of your hand. Do not open if doors are hot.
- Evacuate to designated assembly points indicated by a red flag
- DO NOT re-enter the building until cleared by authorized personnel.

Knowing what to do during an emergency is everyone’s responsibility. Go to www.nvcc.edu/emergency to review emergency procedures for various threatening events.

NOVA Police Training and Events

The NOVA Police conduct an active community outreach program and are looking for opportunities to address your class, club, division, or campus at large on any of the following topics:

- Active Shooter Response
- Dealing with Difficult People
- Staying Safe in the Classroom
- Staying Safe on the Campus
- Self-Defense Considerations
- 10 Things Adjuncts (and other faculty) Should Know About Security
- 20 Things You Probably Don’t Know About the NOVA Police (But You Should)
- Bomb Threat Response
- Sexual Assault, Crimes Against Women, and/or Bystander Intervention
- Identity Theft
- DUI Awareness
- Narcotics
- Gangs

If you are interested in scheduling any police training, please contact Lt. John Weinstein, at jweinstein@nvcc.edu or 571-422-9928, to arrange a convenient time.

Call NOVA Police Dispatch 24/7/365 at
703-764-5000

Download NOVA’s free LiveSafe mobile safety app
www.LiveSafeMobile.com