



Applies to: Faculty, staff, graduate associates, student employees and students¹

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POLICY

Issued: 12/23/1977
Edited: 04/15/2014

To ensure continuity of services to students and the public, it is the policy of the university to remain open. However, during extreme conditions due to severe weather, major utility failure or other reasons, the university may close parts of the Columbus campus or any of its regional campuses.¹ A short-term closing generally does not last more than five days.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Exempt staff	Staff not eligible for overtime pay or compensatory time off according to federal and state law.
Nonexempt staff	Staff eligible for overtime pay or compensatory time off according to federal and state law.
Essential employee	One who has been designated as critical to the operation of the unit, whose presence is required regardless of the existence of an emergency condition, university and/or building(s) closure, canceling of classes and whose absence from duty could endanger the safety and well-being of the campus population and/or facilities. Employees may be designated as essential on a situational basis, e.g., in the event of a snow emergency only or in the event of a public health crisis. Depending on the nature of their work, essential employees may be required to report to work on campus or may be able to work from home. Essential employees must be notified in writing of their status as essential and the location from which they can perform their duties on an annual basis. Designations can be changed at any time depending on need.
Alternate employee	One who has been designated to serve as a back-up to an essential employee. Alternate employees must be notified in writing of their status as alternate on an annual basis. Designations can be changed at any time depending on need.
Standby employee	Any employee not designated as essential or alternate. Standby employees must be notified in writing of their status as standby on an annual basis. Designations can be changed at any time depending on need.
Short-term closing	Official temporary shutdown of designated units of the university due to severe weather, major utility failure or other critical reason the duration of which is five days or less. During such a closing, many administrative offices may be closed and some or all classes may be canceled. Student Life, emergency and facilities support and other operations designated as essential will remain open and essential employees must report to work.

PROCEDURE

Issued: 12/23/1977
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I. Canceling Classes and Closing Offices

- A. A decision to close the university or cancel classes will be done on a location by location basis e.g., Columbus campus, regional campuses, extension offices, research stations, specific buildings, etc.
- B. If weather (or other short-term emergency such as a power outage) warrants cancellation of classes, closing of offices or limiting the hours of operation of the university, a decision will be made to assure the safety of the

¹ Policy 6.17 Disaster Preparedness and University State of Emergency addresses unexpected catastrophic events such as natural and human made disasters or the outbreak of pandemic illnesses. A weather or other short-term closing has neither the catastrophic effect nor the duration of impact on the university community as a University State of Emergency. Weather or other short-term closings and university states of emergency are identified as such when they are declared.



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campus community. Options include:

1. Classes are canceled.
 2. Only essential services remain open, such as those that provide safety and security; prepare and serve meals; provide utilities (e.g. light, heat, water, etc.) to university buildings and properties; hospitals; law enforcement and public safety; snow removal; and others determined as essential.
 3. Other options as conditions warrant.
- C. In the event of severe weather or other conditions that could affect safety, health or access to the university, the president, in consultation with the executive vice president and provost; vice president for human resources; senior vice president for business and finance or their designees; and other vice presidents and deans as appropriate, will have the final authority to make the decision to cancel classes and/or close offices.
- D. For locations other than the Columbus campus such as regional campuses, extension offices, research stations, etc., the head of operations (e.g. dean, director) must consult with the president or designee through appropriate reporting lines prior to making the decision to cancel classes and/or close offices.
- E. Impacted areas will be consulted as possible prior to making the decision to close or cancel classes or activities to determine the effect on classes, business operations, employment matters, special events, athletic events, conferences and other university activities.
- F. The president or authorized designee will make the decision to cancel classes whenever possible by 5 a.m. (communicated by 7:30 a.m.) for day classes and by 1 p.m. (communicated by 3 p.m.) for evening classes. If classes are canceled they will resume the next class day unless otherwise notified.
- G. If offices are closed during the day, they will remain closed until the beginning of the next workday.
- H. If class cancellation or office closure is extended more than 24 hours, the president or authorized designee may re-evaluate the availability of certain services (library, recreation centers, student health center, etc.).
- I. A decision to cancel classes and/or close offices may be based on weather information gathered from the local authorities; official weather reports and forecasts; and consultation with Facilities Operations and Development and Public Safety and/or local law enforcement on regional campuses. Some factors taken into consideration in the decision to cancel classes and/or close offices are:
1. Existence of Level 3 snow emergencies,
 2. Hazardous roadways,
 3. Presence of extreme ice and/or snow,
 4. Excessive wind,
 5. Weather forecast and
 6. Severe cold.

II. Partial Campus and Building Closings

- A. Based on the event, a decision may be made to close specific buildings, sections of buildings or parts of a campus.
- B. Employees may be directed to work at alternate locations or assigned alternate work during partial closings. In these instances, employees will receive their regular rate of pay.
- C. If alternate locations are not available, employees must be compensated in accordance with section VI of this policy.
- D. For partial campus and building closures, all employees in the impacted area must call in or otherwise ensure they receive instructions, regardless of essential, alternate or standby status.



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III. Class Continuance and Attendance During Severe Weather

- A. Faculty may use alternative teaching methods when classes are canceled (e.g., web casts, e-mail, supplemental readings, etc.).
- B. When classes are not canceled and students are unable to reach the campus due to living in or traveling through a Level 3 snow emergency county, students are encouraged to contact the professor to report an absence due to a Level 3 snow emergency. Students who contact their professors or professors' designees will not be penalized for an absence when unable to attend classes due to a Level 3 snow emergency ([3335-9-21 Absences](#)).

IV. Reporting for Work

Employees designated as essential and required to report to work, remain at work or contact their department when classes are canceled and offices are closed must do so. All colleges/VP units must maintain an updated list of individuals designated as essential depending on the nature of the closure. Supervisors will devise a system to notify those among the pool of designated individuals who will be expected to report to work and who can perform work from home.

V. Communication Regarding Class Cancellation and Closure Decision

- A. All communication regarding class cancellation and closure of select units of the university will be handled by University Communications for the Columbus campus or by the authorized designee for other locations. Efforts will be made to notify the media, send e-mail and post web announcements by 7:30 a.m. for day classes and/or office closings and by 3 p.m. for evening classes and work shifts.
- B. In the event of an evening closure, University Communications (or authorized designee for other locations) will attempt to notify the campus and the media by 3 p.m. Verification of media announcements may be done by consulting multiple official sources, including residential cable and tuning to WOSU 89.7 FM Radio or at [wosu.org](#).

VI. Compensation During Cancellation of Classes and a Short-Term Closing

Employees must be compensated as outlined in this section and the table below.

- A. Faculty and staff whose duties are designated as essential and who are unable to perform work due to factors that preclude the university from operating (not due to individual circumstances) may receive their regular base pay, at the discretion of university leadership.
- B. Faculty and staff with pre-approved sick/vacation time during the time of the closure will not be charged for usage.
- C. Staff represented by unions will be compensated in accordance with the terms of their collective bargaining agreements for time worked and may be required to work out of classification as deemed necessary by the department or university.
- D. Standby/alternate non-exempt temporary or student employees are not expected to work and will not be compensated if they are scheduled to work when the university is closed or parts of the university are closed.

Exempt/Non Exempt Status	Compensation	Comments
Nonexempt essential – Employee required to report for work – Employee reports for work	– Employee will receive regular base pay – Hours worked count toward overtime compensation as applicable – Employee will receive hour for hour compensatory time as applicable	– Compensatory time under this policy is a benefit – Compensatory time must be manually added using the earnings code CTA (Comp Time Added) in the HR System, with an explanatory comment and date for audit purposes.



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Exempt/Non Exempt Status	Compensation	Comments
Nonexempt essential – Employee required to report to work – Employee does not report for work	– Employee will not receive regular base pay – Employee may request vacation/compensatory time based on circumstances (e.g. live in or must drive through Level 3 snow emergency, etc.)	– Employee must comply with call-off procedures – Employee may request to make up hours not worked, only within the same work week – If flex time is approved it must be incurred within the same work week – Unit may consider corrective action as applicable
Nonexempt alternate/standby – Employee not required to report for work – Employee does not report for work	– Employee will receive regular base pay – Hours recorded during the university closing will count toward overtime compensation	– Employees do not need to contact their department or report to work if the university is closed
Nonexempt alternate/standby – Employee not required to report for work – Employee reports for work	– Unit notifies employee that the university is closed and employee is sent home – If the unit asks the employee to remain at work, employee will receive regular base pay and hour for hour compensatory time – If the unit sends the employee home but employee remains at work, employee will be paid for hours worked but will not receive hour for hour compensatory time	– If the employee is asked to remain at work, compensatory time must be paid and manually added using the earnings code CTA (Comp Time Added) in the HR System, with an explanatory comment and date for audit purposes – Unit may consider corrective action as applicable for employees who do not leave work as directed
Exempt essential – Employee required to report for work – Employee reports for work	– Employee will receive regular base pay	– Employee does not earn overtime or compensatory time – At the discretion of the unit, flex time may be granted – Unit notifies employee that the university is closed and if not needed, the employee is sent home
Exempt essential – Employee required to report to work (includes employees working an alternate schedule) – Employee does not report for work	– Employee will not receive regular base pay – Employee may request to use vacation or flex time based on circumstances i.e., live in or must drive through Level 3 snow emergency area	– Employee must comply with call-off procedures – Unit may consider corrective action as applicable
Exempt alternate/standby – Employee is not required to report to work – Employee does not report for work	– Employee will receive regular base pay	– Employees do not need to contact their department or report to work if the university is closed



Weather or Other Short-Term Closing Policy 6.15

Office of Human Resources

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Exempt/Non Exempt Status	Compensation	Comments
Nonexempt temporary alternate/standby – Employee is not required to report to work – Employee does not report for work	– Employee will not receive regular base pay	– Employee may request to make up hours not worked, only within the same work week – If flex time is approved it must be incurred within the same work week
Student employees	– Student employees will be paid their regular hourly rate for hours worked	– Student employees must be notified that unless they are designated as essential and report for work, they will not receive regular base pay under this policy
Graduate Associates	– GAs will receive their regular stipend	– For information about stipends, contact the college/VP unit or Graduate School

Responsibilities

Position or Office	Responsibilities
University Leadership	A. The president in consultation with the executive vice president and provost; vice president for human resources; senior vice president for business and finance or their designees and other vice presidents and deans as appropriate, have the final authority to determine when conditions warrant a weather or other short-term closing. For locations other than the Columbus campus such as regional campuses, extension offices, research stations, etc., the head of operations (e.g. dean, director) must consult with the president or designee through appropriate reporting lines prior to making the decision to cancel classes and/or close offices. B. Senior Management Council and other leadership groups should review closing processes on an annual basis during autumn term. C. University Communications is responsible for communicating the emergency closing and subsequent reopening, internally and externally and will coordinate this communication with university leaders. Official information regarding emergency closings will be announced on WOSU 89.7 FM Radio, via email, the Ohio State web site and other local media. D. When a weather or other short-term closing is declared, the executive vice president and provost; vice provosts; and deans and directors of regional campuses, extension offices, research stations; etc., are responsible for disseminating information about the closing to their units. E. The executive vice president and provost; vice provosts; vice presidents; deans; chairs; and regional deans are responsible for designating essential, alternate and standby employees and informing all employees of their designations when hired and annually, preferably prior to the winter weather season.
Employing Unit	A. Designate operations which are essential and that will remain open or in effect during a weather or other short-term closing. B. Designate faculty and staff as essential, alternate and standby in the HRIS. C. Notify employees annually, preferably prior to the winter weather season, of their designation and which essential staff may work from home, in accordance with Disaster Preparedness and University State of Emergency Policy 6.17 (Sample Status Notification Letter) D. Develop and communicate a backup plan in case essential staff are unable to report to work. E. Prepare to and make alternative work arrangements for staff during closures as feasible, depending on the nature of the event, duration, nature of work, staff position responsibilities, etc. F. Confirm with essential faculty and staff their duties and responsibilities during the weather or other short-term closing. Designate faculty and staff to perform duties as needed, which may be outside of their regular classification.



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Position or Office	Responsibilities
Faculty and Staff	<p>A. Check university web site, radio and television to be fully informed about the weather and university closing.</p> <p>B. Notify students of use of alternative teaching methods when classes are canceled, (e.g., web casts, pod casts, e-mail, supplemental readings, etc.).</p> <p>C. Contact supervisor or chair for further instructions.</p>
Students	<p>A. Review information on the university web page for instructions.</p> <p>B. Check university web site, radio and television for university closing and cancellation of classes.</p> <p>C. Communicate with professors to determine if classes will be held via an alternate teaching method.</p> <p>D. Inform professor of absence from class due to Level 3 snow emergency.</p>
Office of Human Resources	Consult with units regarding this policy.

Resources

- Class cancellation and office closure information, WOSU 89.7 FM Radio, wosu.org
- Disaster Leave, Policy 6.28, hr.osu.edu/policy/policy628.pdf
- Disaster Preparedness and University State of Emergency, Policy 6.17, hr.osu.edu/policy/policy617.pdf
- Faculty rule on Absences, Chapter 9, 3335-9-21, trustees.osu.edu/rules/university-rules
- Frequently Asked Questions, hr.osu.edu/policy/resources/615faq.pdf
- Paid Leave Programs, Policy 6.27, hr.osu.edu/policy/policy627.pdf
- Sample Annual Communication, hr.osu.edu/policy/resources/615annual.doc
- Sample Status Notification Letter, hr.osu.edu/policy/resources/615sample.doc
- Scheduling Work and Overtime Compensation, Policy 6.10, hr.osu.edu/policy/policy610.pdf

Contacts

Issue	Office	Telephone	E mail/URL
Policy interpretation	Employee and Labor Relations, Office of Human Resources	614-292-2800	ohrc@hr.osu.edu hr.osu.edu/elr
Payroll issues	Office of the Controller, Payroll Services	614-292-2311	payrolloffice@osu.edu ctr.ohio-state.edu/pay/pay-home.shtml

History

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