



# Weather or Other Short-Term Closing Policy 6.15

## Office of Human Resources

Applies to: Faculty, staff, graduate associates, student employees, and students<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> **This policy does not apply to Health System employees.** The Health System includes employees of University Hospitals, University Hospital East, James Cancer Hospital, Ross Heart Hospital, OSU Harding Hospital, OSU Primary Care Network, and shared services. Health System employees should contact their human resource department for further information.

### POLICY

Issued: 12/23/1977  
Revised: 12/15/2008  
Edited:  
Reviewed:

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.<sup>1</sup> A short-term closing generally does not last more than five days.

### Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Exempt staff</b>	Staff not eligible for overtime pay or compensatory time off according to federal and state law.
<b>Nonexempt staff</b>	Staff eligible for overtime pay or compensatory time off according to federal and state law.
<b>Essential employee</b>	One who has been designated as critical to the operation of the unit, whose presence is required during a short-term partial closing. 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.
<b>Alternate employee</b>	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.
<b>Standby employee</b>	One who has not been 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.
<b>Short-term closing</b>	Official temporary shutdown of designated units of the university due to severe weather, major utility failure or other critical reason which duration is less than five days. During such a closing, many administrative offices are closed and all classes are cancelled. Student Life, emergency and facilities support, and other operations designated as essential will remain open and essential employees must report to work.

<sup>1</sup> 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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## PROCEDURE

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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, 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 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 & provost; associate vice president for human resources; senior vice president for business & 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 cancelled 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:



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1. Existence of Level 3 snow emergencies
2. Hazardous roadways
3. Presence of extreme ice and/or snow
4. Excessive wind
5. Weather forecast
6. Severe cold

### II. 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](#)).

### III. Reporting for Work

Employees designated as essential and required to report to work, remain at work, or contact their department when classes are cancelled 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.

### IV. Communication

- 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 AM Radio, 820 on the AM dial or at [wosu.org](http://wosu.org).

### V. 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 exempt regular staff members who are designated as essential and are required to work, and who do work during a closing will receive their regular base salary. Flex time may be granted at the discretion of the department and in accordance with paid leave policies, based upon business need (see [Policy 6.10](#) Scheduling Work and Overtime Compensation).
- B. Exempt regular staff members whose duties are designated as essential and who are unable to report for work during a closing will have appropriate leave time deducted from their balance, or may be allowed to flex their schedules at the discretion of their departments, provided that departmental call-off rules and



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procedures were followed. If an employee does not have a sufficient leave balance, the employee will not receive their regular base pay for that day.

- C. Faculty, exempt and non-exempt regular staff members 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.
- D. Non-exempt regular staff members whose duties are designated as essential will receive compensatory time, on an hour-for-hour basis for all hours worked during a closing, in addition to their regular base rate of pay. Non-exempt regular staff members whose duties are designated as essential and who are unable to report for work must comply with their department’s call-off rules and procedures.
- E. Faculty, exempt and non-exempt regular staff members whose duties are not designated as essential and who are scheduled to work are not required to call in or report when the university is closed or parts of the university are closed and will receive their regular base rate of pay for hours scheduled.
- F. Compensatory time earned under this policy is a benefit and does not change the individual’s regular work schedule.

Exempt/Non-Exempt Status	Compensation	Comments
<b>Nonexempt essential</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee required to report for work</li> <li>• Employee reports for work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee will receive regular base pay</li> <li>• Hours worked count toward overtime compensation as applicable</li> <li>• Employee will receive hour for hour compensatory time as applicable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compensatory time is a benefit</li> </ul>
<b>Nonexempt essential</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee required to report to work</li> <li>• Employee does not report for work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee will not receive regular base pay</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee may request vacation/comp time based on circumstances i.e., live in or must drive through Level 3 snow emergency area, etc.</li> <li>• Employee may request to make up hours not worked, only within the same work week</li> <li>• If flex time is approved it must be incurred within the same work week</li> <li>• Employee must comply with call-off procedures</li> <li>• Unit may consider corrective action as applicable</li> </ul>
<b>Nonexempt essential</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee works alternate schedule and is scheduled to work</li> <li>• Employee reports for work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee will receive regular base pay</li> <li>• Hours worked count toward overtime compensation as applicable</li> <li>• Employee will be paid hour for hour compensatory time as applicable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compensatory time is a benefit</li> </ul>
<b>Nonexempt essential</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee works alternate schedule and is scheduled to work</li> <li>• Employee does not report for work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee will not receive regular base pay</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee may request vacation/comp time/or to use flex time based on circumstances e.g., live in or must drive through Level 3 snow emergency area, etc.</li> <li>• Employee may request to make up</li> </ul>



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		<p>hours not worked only within the same work week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If flex time is approved it must be incurred within the same work week</li> <li>• Employee must comply with call-off procedures</li> <li>• Unit may consider corrective action as applicable</li> </ul>
<p><b>Nonexempt alternate/standby</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee not required to report for work</li> <li>• Employee does not report for work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee will receive regular base pay</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The hours recorded during the university closing will count towards overtime compensation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Nonexempt alternate/standby</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee not required to report for work</li> <li>• Employee reports for work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee will receive regular base pay</li> <li>• Unit notifies employee that the university is closed and employee is sent home</li> <li>• If the unit decides to ask the employee to remain at work, employee will receive regular base pay and hour for hour compensatory time</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Exempt essential</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee required to report for work</li> <li>• Employee reports for work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee will receive regular base pay</li> <li>• Unit notifies employee that the university is closed, and if not needed, the employee is sent home</li> <li>• At the discretion of the unit, flex time may be granted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee does not earn overtime or compensatory time</li> <li>• If granted by the unit, employee may use flex time consistent with university policy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Exempt essential</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee required to report to work (includes employees working an alternate schedule)</li> <li>• Employee does not report for work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If an employee does not have a sufficient leave balance, the employee will not receive regular base pay</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee will have appropriate leave time deducted from their balance, or</li> <li>• Employee may request to use flex time based on circumstances e.g., live in or must drive through a Level 3 snow emergency area, etc.</li> <li>• Employee must comply with call-off procedures</li> <li>• Unit may consider corrective action as applicable</li> </ul>
<p><b>Exempt alternate/standby</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee is not required to report to work</li> <li>• Employee does not report for work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee will receive regular base pay</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Temp/Term/Student Employees</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees in Temp/Term appointments and Student Employees must be notified that unless they are designated as</li> </ul>



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		essential and report for work, they will not receive regular base pay under this policy
<b>Graduate Associates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GAs will receive their regular stipend</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For information about stipends, contact the college, VP unit or graduate school</li> </ul>

G. 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.

### Responsibilities

Position, or Office	Responsibilities
<b>University Leadership</b>	<p><b>A.</b> The president in consultation with the executive vice president &amp; provost; associate 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.</p> <p><b>B.</b> Senior Management Council and other leadership groups should review closing processes on an annual basis during autumn quarter.</p> <p><b>C.</b> 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 – 820 AM, via email, the Ohio State web site, and other local media.</p> <p><b>D.</b> When a weather or other short-term closing is declared, the executive vice president &amp; provost; vice provosts; vice presidents; and deans and directors of regional campuses, extension offices, research stations, etc., are responsible for disseminating information about the closing to their units.</p> <p><b>E.</b> The executive vice president &amp; 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.</p>
<b>Employing Unit</b>	<p><b>A.</b> Designate operations which are essential and that will remain open or in effect during a weather or other short-term closing.</p> <p><b>B.</b> Create and maintain a list of faculty and staff designated as essential, alternate, and standby under this policy.</p> <p><b>C.</b> Notify employees annually, preferably prior to the winter weather season, of their designation and which essential staff may work from home (<a href="#">Sample Status Notification Letter</a>).</p> <p><b>D.</b> Develop and communicate a backup plan in case essential staff are unable to report to work.</p> <p><b>E.</b> 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.</p> <p><b>F.</b> 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.</p>
<b>Faculty and Staff</b>	<p><b>A.</b> Check radio, television channels, and university web site to be fully informed about the weather and</p>



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	<p>university closing.</p> <p><b>B.</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><b>C.</b> Contact supervisor or chair for further instructions.</p>
<b>Students</b>	<p><b>A.</b> Review information on the university web page for instructions.</p> <p><b>B.</b> Check residential cable for university closing and cancellation of classes.</p> <p><b>C.</b> Communicate with professors to determine if classes will be held via an alternate teaching method.</p> <p><b>D.</b> Inform professor of absence from class due to Level 3 snow emergency.</p>
<b>Office of Human Resources</b>	<p><b>A.</b> Consult with units regarding this policy.</p>

### Resources

Class cancellation and office closure information [WOSU AM Radio 820](#)

[Policy 6.10](#) Scheduling Work and Overtime Compensation

[Policy 6.17](#) Disaster Preparedness and University State of Emergency

[Policy 6.27](#) Paid Leave Programs

[Health system policies](#)

Faculty rule on [Absences](#)

### Contacts

Issue	Office	Telephone	E-mail/URL
Policy interpretation	Organization and Human Resource Consulting, Office of Human Resources	614-292-2800	<a href="mailto:ohrc@hr.osu.edu">ohrc@hr.osu.edu</a> <a href="http://hr.osu.edu/ohrc">hr.osu.edu/ohrc</a>
Payroll questions	Payroll Services, Office of Human Resources	614-292-2311	<a href="mailto:payroll@hr.osu.edu">payroll@hr.osu.edu</a> <a href="http://hr.osu.edu/payroll">hr.osu.edu/payroll</a>

### History

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