THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Weather or Other Short-Term Closing, 6.15

University Policy

Applies to: Faculty, staff, graduate associates, student employees, and students, excluding **Health System** employees.

Responsible Office

Office of Human Resources

POLICY

Issued: 12/23/1977
Revised: 02/03/2023 (minor revision)

To provide 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. The Disaster Preparedness and University State of Emergency 6.17 policy 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. A short-term closing generally does not last more than five days.

Purpose of the Policy

To provide guidance on and promote consistent application of procedures during a weather or other short-term closing.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Alternate employee	One who has been designated to serve as a back-up to an essential employee.
Essential employee	One who has been designated as critical to the operation of the unit, whose presence (on site or remote) is required regardless of the existence of an emergency condition, university and/or building(s) closure, or canceling of classes and whose absence from duty could endanger the safety and well-being of the campus population and/or facilities.
Exempt employees	Employees ineligible for overtime compensation and compensatory time as defined in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).
Health System	University Hospital, East Hospital, Brain and Spine Hospital, Richard M. Ross Heart Hospital, Harding Hospital, Dodd Rehabilitation Hospital, Ambulatory Clinics and Services, and Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute and Outreach Sites.
Nonexempt employees	Employees eligible for overtime compensation or compensatory time as defined in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and state law.
Short-term closing	Official temporary shutdown of designated units of the university, generally lasting for five days or less, due to severe weather, major utility failure, or other critical reason. 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.
Standby employee	Any employee not designated as essential or alternate.
Unit	College or administrative unit.

PROCEDURE

Issued: 12/23/1977
Revised: 02/03/2023 (minor revision)

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 campus community. Options include:
   1. Classes are canceled.
   2. Only essential services remain open, such as those that provide safety and security; meal preparation and service; utilities including, but not limited to, light, heat, and water to university buildings and properties; health care; 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, senior 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, in most scenarios, they will remain closed until the beginning of the next workday unless otherwise instructed. Faculty, staff, graduate associates, and student employees may be directed to work at an alternate location, directed to telework (work remotely), or assigned alternate work.

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 including, but not limited to, the libraries, recreation centers, and student health center.

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. For partial campus and building closures, all employees in the impacted area must call in or otherwise contact their supervisor to receive instructions, regardless of their designation as essential, alternate, or standby.

C. Employees may be directed to work at alternate locations, directed to telework (work remotely), or assigned alternate work during partial closings. In these instances, employees will receive their regular rate of pay.

D. If telework is not an option or alternate locations are not available, employees must be compensated in accordance with Procedure VI of this policy.

Applies to: Faculty, staff, graduate associates, student employees, and students, excluding Health System employees.

III. Class Continuance and Attendance During Severe Weather
- A. Instructors who teach in person, online, or distance-learning classes are encouraged to notify their students on how class may continue with alternative teaching methods during a university closure in accordance with the Office of Academic Affairs Procedures and Guidelines Handbook, Chapter 2: Unit Administration, Continuity of Course Scheduling.
- B. When in person 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 in person classes due to a Level 3 snow emergency (Faculty Rule 3335-9-21 Absences).

IV. Employee Designations
- A. Units are responsible for ensuring the proper designation of faculty and staff as essential, alternate, and **standby employees**.
- B. Employees will receive an annual notification, generated by Workday, of whether they have been designated as an essential, alternate, or standby employee.
  1. Designations can be changed at any time depending on operational necessity.
  2. Student employees and intermittent employees should not be designated or utilized as essential or **alternate employees** unless operationally necessary.
  3. 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.
- C. Employees designated as essential are required to report to work, remain at work, or contact their department when classes are canceled, and offices are closed. All **units** must maintain an updated list of individuals designated as essential depending on the nature of the closure.

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 the Office of Marketing and Communications (OMC) 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, OMC (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 local and cable television providers, WOSU 89.7 FM Radio, or wosu.org.
- C. When a weather or other short-term closing is declared, the executive vice president and provost; vice provosts; vice presidents; and deans and directors of regional campuses, extension offices, research stations; etc., are responsible for disseminating information about the impact of the closing to their units.

VI. Responsibilities
- A. Units
  1. Designate operations which are essential and that will remain open or in effect during a weather or other short-term closing.
  2. Develop and communicate a backup plan in case essential employees are unable to report to work.
  3. Prepare to and make alternative work arrangements for faculty and staff during closures as feasible, depending on the nature of the event, duration, nature of work, faculty/staff position responsibilities, etc.
  4. 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.

Applies to: Faculty, staff, graduate associates, student employees, and students, excluding Health System employees.

B. Faculty, Staff, Graduate Associates, and Student Employees
   1. Check university website, radio, and television to be fully informed about the weather and university closing.
   2. Contact unit or chair for further instructions.

VII. Compensation
   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. When working due to operational necessity, teleworking, or working at an alternative work location, standby/alternate non-exempt temporary or student employees will be paid their regular hourly rate for hours worked.
   E. Employee compensation will be addressed as outlined in the table below.

Exempt/Non Exempt Status	Compensation	Comments
Nonexempt essential		
Employee required to report for work and 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 – Employee must enter the time via Workday, using the appropriate short-term closure code.
Employee required to report for work, but 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 and 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
Employee not required to report for work, but 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,	– If the employee is asked to remain at work, then employee must enter the time via Workday, using the appropriate short-term closure code. – Unit may consider corrective action as applicable for employees who do not leave work as directed

Applies to: Faculty, staff, graduate associates, student employees, and students, excluding Health System employees.

Exempt/Non Exempt Status	Compensation	Comments
	employee will be paid for hours worked but will not receive hour for hour compensatory time	
Exempt essential		
Employee required to report for work and 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
Employee required to report for work (includes employees working an alternate schedule), but 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 for work and 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
Nonexempt temporary alternate/standby		
Employee is not required to report for work and 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 employee is required to report for work and student employee reports for work	– Student employees will be paid their regular hourly rate for hours worked	– Student employees must be notified that unless, due to operational necessity, they are required to report for work, they will not be paid under/pursuant to this policy.
Graduate Associates		
Graduate Associate is required to report for work and graduate associate reports for work	– GAs will receive their regular stipend	– For information about stipends, contact the unit or Graduate School

Responsibilities

Position or Office	Responsibilities
Faculty, staff, graduate associates, and student employees	1. Check university website, radio, and television to be fully informed about the weather and university closing. 2. Contact unit or chair for further instructions. 3. For partial campus and building closures, all employees in impacted area must call in or otherwise contact supervisor to receive instructions. 4. Employees designated as essential are required to report to work, remain at work, or contact their department when classes are canceled, and offices are closed.

Applies to: Faculty, staff, graduate associates, student employees, and students, excluding Health System employees.

Position or Office	Responsibilities
Instructors	Notify students on how class may continue with alternative teaching methods during a university closure as set forth in the policy.
Office of Marketing and Communications or authorized designee for locations other than Columbus campus	Handle communications regarding class cancellation and closure of select units as set forth in the policy.
Students	Are encouraged to contact the professor to report an absence due to a Level 3 snow emergency.
Units	1. Ensure proper designation of faculty and staff as essential, alternate, and standby employees. Unless it is an operational necessity, do not designate student employees as essential or alternate. 2. Maintain an updated list of individuals designated as essential depending on the nature of the closure. 3. Designate operations which are essential and that will remain open or in effect during a weather or other short-term closing. 4. Develop and communicate a backup plan in case essential employees are unable to report to work. 5. Prepare to and make alternative work arrangements for employees during closures as feasible. 6. Confirm with essential employees their duties and responsibilities during the weather or other short-term closing. 7. Designate faculty and staff to perform duties as needed.
University Leadership	1. 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 determine when conditions warrant a weather or other short-term closing. 2. 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. 3. When a weather or other short-term closing is declared, the executive vice president and provost; vice provosts; vice presidents; and deans and directors of regional campuses, extension offices, research stations; etc., are responsible for disseminating information about the impact of the closing to their units. 4. The president or authorized designee may re-evaluate the availability of certain services if class cancellation or office closure is extended more than 24 hours.

Resources

Governance Documents

Disaster Leave 6.28 policy, hr.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/policy628.pdf
Disaster Preparedness and University State of Emergency 6.17 policy, hr.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/policy617.pdf
Faculty Rule on Absences, Chapter 9, 3335-9-21, trustees.osu.edu/bylaws-and-rules/3335-9
Office of Academic Affairs Procedures and Guidelines Handbook, Chapter 2: Unit Administration, Continuity of Course Scheduling, faculty.osu.edu/chapter-2-unit-administration/section-1#contscheduling
Paid Time Off 6.27 policy, hr.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/policy627.pdf
Scheduling Work and Overtime Compensation 6.10 policy, hr.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/policy610.pdf
Weather and Other Short-Term Closing 6.15 Policy Frequently Asked Questions, hr.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/policy615-faq.pdf

Additional Guidance

Class cancellation and office closure information, WOSU 89.7 FM Radio, wosu.org

Contacts

Issue	Office	Telephone	E mail/URL
Payroll issues	HR Connection	614-247-myHR (6947)	HRConnection@osu.edu
Policy questions	HR Connection	614-247-myHR (6947)	HRConnection@osu.edu

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History

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