TO: ECU Staff Employees

FROM: John M. Toller, Associate Vice Chancellor
       University Human Resources

RE: Interim Adverse Weather Guidelines

DATE: October 14, 2011

As part of the ongoing process to convert ECU policies and procedures into the new Policy, Regulation and Rule (PRR) format, the University decided to update the Adverse Weather guidelines to help clarify some of the questions and concerns raised during previous storm events (see attached document). Best practices from other UNC institutions and state agencies were utilized, along with input from faculty, staff and administrative leaders, to help update and improve this document.

Two key changes involve the clarification of an “emergency employee” and creation of categories that describe University operational status during a storm or related emergency. The revised document eliminates the terms “essential employee” and “critical employee” and replaces them with two groups of employee – emergency and non-emergency. It is incumbent upon the unit head to designate their employees who are “emergency personnel” and notify them of this designation and their role in an emergency. Other institutions and agencies reported that this terminology helped employees better understand their role and requirements during an emergency.

The operational categories (listed as Categories A thru E) are intended to clarify to everyone the status of operations for the University during an emergency. The categories cover all possible scenarios from normal operations and schedules, to classes canceled/adverse conditions for employees, to full closure of campus. We do not expect employees to memorize the categories and we will include a brief explanation of the category designation when communication of a weather event occurs. We believe the category designations will clarify the operating status of the university and allow faculty, staff and students to refer to the Adverse Weather Guidelines for more detailed information regarding the specific category of operation the institution is observing.

Please become familiar with the updated guidelines so you are prepared for the next adverse weather event.
Title Adverse Weather/Conditions and Emergency Closings

PRR Classification # (List POL, REG RULE and leave # blank. To be done by Legal)

PRR General Subject Matter Emergency Closing, Adverse Weather, Leave for Emergency Closing, Cancellation of Classes

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Authority: Chancellor

History: Effective 7/1/00; Revised 2/10

Related Policies: UNC Code: Appendix I.C (personnel), XVI (facilities) (Note: hyperlink needed)


Contact for Info: Chief Public Affairs Officer (328-5419) and Associate Vice Chancellor, Human Resources (328-9881)

1. Introduction

1.1. As a University that is not only an educational residential campus, but also a medical and research campus, East Carolina University (“University”) never really “closes” completely, even during adverse weather or other emergency situations. A certain level of essential services must be provided, regardless of the circumstances, and the University is committed to maintaining full service levels to the extent possible. This document provides information regarding the University’s operations during adverse weather and other emergency conditions, including official closings, and establishes guidelines for accounting for time or releasing employees from work when such conditions occur.

1.2. This policy applies to all employees of the University, including faculty, staff and administrators, including those assigned to ECU Physicians and other clinical health care operations, as well as to graduate assistants, postdoctoral fellows, and student workers.

2. Decision-Making Authority

2.1. Authority Independent from the State of North Carolina
The University has the authority to make its own decisions and announcements about the operation of the University during adverse weather and other emergency conditions. Public announcements about closings or late opening applicable to other State agencies, or to other State employees, do not apply to East Carolina University or its employees. Unless the University announces a closing, late opening, or cancellation of classes, all offices and service operations are expected to remain open, and faculty and staff are expected to report to work as outlined herein.

2.2. Institutional Delegated Authority
The Chancellor, or his/her designee, will determine the extent to which operations of the University will be suspended or temporarily curtailed, or closed. Individual departments are not
authorized to make these decisions independently. Should there be emergency circumstances that require closing of one or a small group of departments, the Vice Chancellor with supervisory responsibility for the department has authority to close the relevant operations. In the case of special events such as Athletic events, Music or Theater productions, fundraising or other non-critical activities, event coordinators may modify schedules of persons working at the event with the approval of the appropriate Vice Chancellor.

3. Definitions

3.1. Adverse Weather and/or Conditions
Adverse weather or other conditions that may prohibit an employee from reporting to work but do not necessitate the closing of facilities or curtailing operations.

3.2. Closing Conditions
These are conditions that necessitate the closing of the University or the curtailing of operations. Conditions that may be hazardous to life or safety and that may warrant closing include: catastrophic life threatening weather (snow, ice, hurricane, tornado, earthquake, flood or other natural disaster), fire, critical equipment failure, disruption of power and/or water, contamination by hazardous agents, terrorist acts, forced evacuations from the agency or work site or activities that necessitate non-essential personnel remaining off campus until the campus can be returned to safe operational status.

3.3. Emergency Employee
An employee who is required to report for and remain at work during an emergency because his or her position has been designated by the University as critical to University operations during emergencies is an Emergency Employee. Emergency employees may not be needed for all emergencies, and the department head has the authority to designate the emergency employees who are most needed for the particular emergency. This designation is applicable to employees at all locations.

Each department should designate emergency functions and provide HR with a list of positions determined to be in the emergency category. Supervisors must notify their employees if their positions have been designated as Emergency positions.

Failure of an Emergency employee to report to work can result in disciplinary action and/or require the hours missed to be charged to leave with or without pay, as appropriate.

3.4. Non-Emergency Employees

Employees who are not designated as Emergency Employees and therefore are not required to report to work during Adverse Weather and/or Conditions, Closing Conditions or other emergency conditions are considered Non-Emergency Employees. These employees may be designated as emergency personnel (Emergency Employees) during times of staffing shortages based on operational needs and must be notified and given reasonable time to report.

3.5. University

References to the operational status or schedule of the University within this regulation include and apply to all employees, including those who work in ECU Physicians, the Brody School of Medicine, and non-campus locations.

4. Monitoring Conditions
4.1. The weather and other emergency conditions are monitored on a daily basis by Environmental Health and Campus Safety (EHCS) and Campus Operations. These units are responsible for assessing road and walking way conditions including campuses, clinics, sidewalks, steps, roadways and parking lots, and collection of other assessment information from on-campus groups such as Grounds Services, Police, Transit and EH&S. The ECU Physicians’ emergency coordinator will be contacted to coordinate any recommended change in their scheduled operations. Schedule decisions for ECU Physicians will be made by the Chancellor or his designee based on the safety of their patients and staff and their specific operational needs.

4.2. After EHCS and Campus Operations emergency coordinators have compiled sufficient information from the various sources, relevant information is presented to the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance (VCAF).

4.3. The VCAF contacts the Chancellor if there is a recommendation to change scheduled operations.

4.4. Once a decision has been made to change scheduled operations, the VCAF contacts the EHCS emergency coordinator to initiate the emergency notification system through the university public information officer and emergency phone tree.

4.5. For more detailed information, refer to the Emergency Related Operations Schedule Adjustment Procedures.

5. Announcements

5.1. The University will operate under Category A, Normal Operations, unless the Chancellor or designee publicly announces one of the alternate categories. The University will strive to make an announcement regarding its operations no later than 6:00 a.m. on the affected day. ECU Physicians will notify its staff and patients of any schedule changes. Event Coordinators will notify event staff and participants of any event schedule changes.

5.2. Categories of operation include:

5.2.1. **Category A: Normal Operations** – The University is operating at full status with no special advisories.

5.2.2. **Category B: Classes Are In Session** – The University is open but operating under adverse conditions.

5.2.3. **Category C: Classes Are Cancelled** – The University is open but operating under adverse conditions.

5.2.4. **Category D: The University (or a specific operational unit) Will Open Late or Close Early** – Emergency personnel should report as required.

5.2.5. **Category E: The University (or a specific operational unit) Is Closed** – Only emergency personnel should report.

6. Category B and C – University is Open but under Adverse Conditions

6.1. **Emergency Employees**
Employees who have been designated as “Emergency” are required to report to work and must make all necessary arrangements to do so as quickly and safely as possible.
6.2 Non-Emergency Employees
Non-emergency employees are encouraged to report to work at regularly scheduled times. However, the University recognizes that there may be factors (i.e., transportation, closings of schools/daycares, etc) that may prevent employees from reporting to work. Non-emergency employees are permitted to determine for themselves with their supervisor's approval as appropriate whether they should report to work and can do so safely, but they may be required to use leave or make up time. Temporary employees will not be paid for time they do not work. Faculty who have scheduled classes, but who are unable to report on a day when classes are being held under adverse conditions, should make every effort to notify class participants of class cancellation in advance.

6.3 Pay and Time Reporting
6.3.1 Time At Work
It is the responsibility of employees to make a good faith effort to come to work at regularly scheduled times during times that adverse weather or other conditions of a serious nature exist. Overtime-eligible employees who work during Adverse Weather will be paid in accordance with the State's policy on Hours of Work and Overtime Compensation.

6.3.2 Time Away From Work
6.3.2.1 Emergency Employees
Employees designated as Emergency are expected to report for, or remain at work in emergency situations. Failure to report to work can result in disciplinary action and/or require the hours missed to be charged to leave with or without pay, as appropriate.

6.3.2.2 Regular, leave-earning SPA and non-faculty EPA staff who are designated as Non-emergency Employees may account for this time by (a) Using available accrued annual leave, compensatory time, or bonus leave; and/or (b) Making up the time within one year of the occurrence.

Time made up should occur during the same work week if possible, or in a week in which the employee would not otherwise work 40 hours (such as a week that includes a vacation, holiday, or sick day). Employees who volunteer to make up Adverse Weather Time on a holiday will not receive Holiday Premium Pay. Prior supervisory approval is required before working a Holiday. Time not made up within the 12-month period will be charged against annual or bonus leave if available or deducted from pay.

Employees wishing to make up the time should indicate those hours on their time sheet. The number of hours should be included under “Other Leave” with the code “AW” for adverse weather.

6.3.3 Employees, regardless of their emergency or non-emergency status, who have time away from work and are on prearranged vacation or sick leave will continue to charge leave to the appropriate account with no provision for make-up time.

6.3.4 Clinical Support Services (CSS) Employees will adhere to the provisions regarding use of leave as detailed in the Clinical Support Services (CSS) Policy Manual.

6.3.5 Student Workers and temporary employees will not be paid for time they do not work.
6.4 Activities Affected by Class Cancellation or Classes Held Under Adverse Conditions
If the Chancellor or designee announces that classes or other activities are cancelled – or that classes are being held under adverse weather advisory – and that this is an optional workday for faculty and staff, the following applies:

6.4.1 Students who miss scheduled activities will be allowed to make up any work missed.
6.4.2 Faculty members should make arrangements to complete all interrupted activities.

7. Categories D and E – University Late Openings and Closings

7.1. When the decision has been made to open late or close the University, no students, faculty members, or staff members should be on campus during the period the University is not open except:

7.1.1. Students who reside in campus housing; and
7.1.2. Employees who have been designated as Emergency; and
7.1.3. Any other employee who has been notified by an appropriate supervisor to report to work during this period of time.

7.2. Pay and Time Reporting
7.2.1. Time At Work
7.2.1.1. Emergency employees who are required to work will receive compensatory time on an hour-for-hour basis for all hours worked. This time must be used within 12 months of its being awarded. Every effort will be given to allow employees the opportunity to take this time off. Compensatory time must be used before vacation or bonus leave.

7.2.1.2. Non-emergency employees who are needed for situations such as cleanup and recovery during the time the University remains closed, or have received prior permission from the supervisor to work during the time the University is closed, will be compensated on an hour-for-hour basis for all hours worked. This time must be used within 12 months of its being awarded. Every effort will be given to allow employees the opportunity to take this time off. Compensatory time must be used before vacation or bonus leave.

7.2.2. Time Away From Work
7.2.2.1. Emergency Employees
Employees designated as Emergency are expected to report for, or remain at work in emergency situations. Failure to report to work at regularly scheduled times can result in disciplinary action and/or require the hours missed to be charged to leave with or without pay, as appropriate. The department head may determine that the conditions justified a late arrival. In such cases, the lost time will not be charged to the employee’s leave balances or to leave without pay, and no disciplinary action will be taken.

7.2.2.2. Non-emergency employees
Non-emergency employees in permanent positions whose presence is not required will not be docked pay for regularly-scheduled work hours missed due to official late opening or closing, nor will they be required to make up the work time or report such time as annual or other accrued leave.
Employees should reflect such time by indicating the number of hours they were scheduled to work during the late opening/closing under the “Other Leave” column and use the code “UC” for University Closed.

7.2.2.3 Student workers and temporary employees, which may include student workers, will not be paid for time they do not work.

7.2.2.4 Employees who are on prearranged vacation leave or sick leave will charge leave to the appropriate account for the time away from work with no provision for make-up time.

8. **Location of Affected Facilities**
   8.1. All University-facilities in Pitt County are subject to these procedures, and must remain open with at least skeleton staffing unless there is an official announcement by the Chancellor or his designee.
   8.2. ECU Physicians will follow the Adverse Weather Operations Plan regarding Adverse Weather delays and closings. Departments are encouraged to develop adverse weather plans that are specific to their units and comply with this regulation.
   8.3. Employees who work in locations outside Pitt County and not affected by the adverse weather or unusual conditions are expected to work their normal schedule. When these locations outside Pitt County are under Adverse Weather and/or Conditions, the employees should follow the site’s or location’s procedures and notify supervisors immediately for further instructions. Remote sites may be closed only with approval from the Vice Chancellor with supervisory responsibility for the program or his/her designee.

9. **Communications**
   Employees are encouraged to contact their supervisor for any clarifications regarding whether or not to report to work.
   Information regarding implementation of this policy will be available via the following avenues. ECU Lists, text message and Alerts.
   9.1. ECU main web page (www.ecu.edu). In the event of adverse conditions that impacts campus functions, this page will contain an “ECU Alert” link to the latest announcements concerning campus operations.
   9.2. ECU Emergency Hotline 328-0062 for all ECU faculty, staff and students, except ECU Physicians.
   9.3. ECU Physicians Adverse Weather Hotline: 744-5080
   9.4. Local radio and television broadcasts, both network stations and the University station, Channel 99.
   9.5. Each supervisor is responsible for appropriate communication to his/her staff members.

10. **Reporting of Closings**
    In accordance with the State Personnel Manual Leave Policy, all closings shall be reported to the State Personnel Director within five days after the occurrence. It is the responsibility of the Associate Vice Chancellor, Human Resources, to prepare and forward the University’s report. The University Public Information Officer will notify UNC General Administration of the University’s current status.

11. **Miscellaneous**
    11.1. **Transfer to Another State Agency**
        If an employee transfers to another State agency before the time away from work (AW) is made up, the make-up time may be transferred as a minus if the receiving agency is willing to accept it. Otherwise, the leave must be charged to the appropriate leave or deducted from the employee's paycheck by the releasing agency.
11.2 Separation
If an employee separates from State government before the time away from work (AW) is made up, it must be charged to vacation/bonus leave or deducted from the final paycheck.

11.3 Catastrophic Conditions
When catastrophic, life threatening weather conditions occur, as created by hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, etc., and it becomes necessary for authorities to order evacuation from the University, the University will follow procedures applicable to status Categories D and E, University Late Openings and Closings, as described above. Employees required to remain at work may be relieved administratively for a period of time necessary to assure the safety of their family.