HRM-032

# Disruption of Normal University Operations Resulting from Weather or Emergency Events

**Effective Date** Monday, December 13, 2010

**Status** Final

**Last Revised** Tuesday, September 8, 2026

**Policy Type** University

**Contact Office** Emergency Management (UVA)

UVA Human Resources

**Oversight Executive**
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer

**Applies To** Academic Division and the College at Wise.

**Table of Contents**


Policy Statement
1. Decision to Authorize a Modified Schedule
    a. Satellite Office Closings
    b. Supervisor Flexibility
2. Communication of a Modified Schedule
3. Maintaining University Operations during a Weather or Emergency Event
    a. Designated/Non-designated Employee Status
    b. Report to Work or Work Remotely
    c. Grace Period
    d. Failure to Report to Work
    e. Telecommuting from Alternate Work Locations
    f. Expectations of Wage Employees during a Modified Schedule
4. Roles and Responsibilities
5. Compliance with Policy

Procedures


## Reason for Policy

The University seeks to protect its students, faculty, staff, patients, and visitors, its research enterprises, and its facilities during periods of inclement weather and other emergency events. To that end, the University has established requirements to maintain operational continuity and recovery when a change in operating status is necessary.

## Definition of Terms

## Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

**Description**

Designated senior University leaders and departments who are assembled and directed by the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer to manage the response and recovery from an emergency event that impacts the University. The CIMT is the team identified in the University's Critical Incident Management Plan.

## Designated Employee

**Description**

An employee whose assigned job duties and responsibilities are considered critical to maintaining the essential operations of the University when changes in operating status occur due to an emergency event. Designated employees are first responders needed to meet the immediate needs of students, patients, research programs, or general operations.

## Emergency Event

**Description**

Any event, natural or man-made, with the potential to create unsafe conditions, cause significant injuries or deaths, shut down the University, disrupt operations, or cause physical or environmental damage. Examples include:

- Fire
- Hazardous Materials Incident
- Flood
- Severe Weather
    - Winter Weather
    - Hurricane
    - Tornado
- Earthquake
- Utility Failure (including Communication and Technology Systems)
- Radiological Accident
- Civil Disturbance
- Explosion
- Public Health Threat
- Acts of Violence
- Acts of Terrorism

## Essential University Operations

**Description**

University operations that must be maintained at all times include but are not limited to: services basic to health care, law enforcement, safety, daily care of students, research projects including animal care, and University infrastructure (buildings and grounds, utilities, business, financial and student information systems, and electronic communications).

## Exempt Employee

**Description**

An employee who is not subject to the minimum wage and overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) based on salary and duties performed. Exempt employees receive an annual salary for work performed until the duties of their job are complete, without expectation of pay for extended hours.

## Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

**Description**

Federal law establishing overtime pay, minimum wage and child labor requirements affecting full-time and part-time employees. Overtime pay at a rate of not less than one and one-half times the regular rate of pay is required after 40 hours of work in a workweek for those employees covered by the Act (non-exempt).

## Grace Period

**Description** A maximum of up to two hours past the start of the normal shift to report to work.

## Modified Schedule

**Description**

A decision made by the President (or designee) to modify normal University operating hours for non-designated employees for a specified period of time as a result of an emergency event and to require only designated employees responsible for maintaining essential University operations to report to work for a specified period of time.

## Non–Designated Employee

**Description**

An employee whose assigned job duties and responsibilities are not immediately critical to maintaining the essential services of the University when normal University operations are disrupted as a result of an emergency event.

## Non–Exempt Employee

**Description**

An employee who is subject to the minimum wage and overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act based on duties performed for time worked and recorded. Non-exempt employees are compensated at a rate of one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay for time worked in excess of 40 in a workweek.

## Wage Employee

**Description**

An employee whose terms and conditions of employment stipulate an hourly rate of pay rather than a fixed salary and is paid on an hourly basis for actual hours worked. Wage employees are not eligible for leave or other benefits. These employees are not covered by the Virginia Personnel Act and are non-exempt for purposes of

overtime compensation as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act.

**Policy Statement**

As a general practice, the University makes every effort to maintain its normal schedule of operation. However, in the event of unforeseen circumstances or emergency events, the University may change its hours of operation. At such times, the University has a prescribed method for evaluating and communicating these changes to University students, faculty, staff, patients, and the general public.

The University maintains the right to change the provisions of this policy as warranted by circumstances during an emergency event.

1. **Decision to Authorize a Modified Schedule:**
   The university president (or designee) has the sole authority to make decisions regarding changes to the normal operating schedule of the University. Disruption of operations may be for a partial shift, such as in the case of delayed openings and early closings, or a full shift.

   This authority is delegated to the executive vice president and chief operating officer who makes all such decisions in consultation with the executive vice president and provost and the University's Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) or Severe Weather Assessment Team. Schools/departments/units are expected to abide by any decision made regarding operating status.

   All matters related to changes in class or school schedules are decided by the executive vice president and chief operating officer in consultation with the executive vice president and provost and the CIMT and/or the Severe Weather Assessment Team.
   a. **Satellite Office Closings:**
      Satellite offices and separate campuses, including the University's College at Wise, remote locations of the School of Continuing and Professional Studies, research stations, and other sites may operate on a modified schedule. The chancellor and directors of these facilities are to consult with the executive vice president and chief operating officer (or designee) prior to making and announcing any changes to their operating schedules.
   b. **Supervisor Flexibility:**
      Supervisors should be flexible in granting appropriate leave and give consideration to those employees who feel that it is not safe to travel in bad weather when the University is open. Employees come from a wide geographic area; conditions can vary substantially over the region. Supervisors should be especially sensitive to the childcare and family problems that result from school closings, weather, or emergency events.

2. **Communication of a Modified Schedule:**
   The University will announce modified schedules through various media sources. The Office of University Communications will provide announcements to local television and radio stations to cover all day, evening, night, and weekend University work schedules as well as update the Academic Division Hotline messages. Standardized messages covering employees of both the University and the Medical Center will be broadcast (see: "Emergency Event Status Messages"). It is the supervisors' responsibility to share and discuss with employees the University's standardized messages announcing modified schedules.

Announcements of a modified schedule to leave work early will be communicated through the University's chain-of-command. Employees will be notified of the early departure by their supervisors.

Up-to-date temporary changes to UVA's academic operations caused by an emergent event or inclement weather are maintained on the University's online Operations Status Board. Additional media sources will also be used to communicate modified schedules to the University community. These may include the University web site, University email, and LCD screens around Grounds. Employees may also call the University's closings and delays hotlines at (434) 243-7669 or (434) 924-7669 to obtain the latest information.

3. **Maintaining University Operations during a Weather or Emergency Event:**
   To maintain operations during a weather or emergency event, the University requires:

   a. **Designated/Non-designated Employee Status:**
      The University uses the term "designated" to identify those employees who are first responders required to work during an emergency event to maintain essential University operations. Those employees identified as "non-designated" are instructed to work remotely when a full shift modification is announced, or report after the start of their regular schedule, or depart early if there is an announcement of a modified schedule.

      Deans and department heads should determine the critical operations within their respective schools/department/units and maintain those essential services during an emergency event. Supervisors should consult with school/department/unit administration to consistently identify those designated employees needed to maintain operations during emergency events.

      On an annual basis, supervisors will notify every employee in their school/department/unit of their status as a designated employee or non-designated employee. Supervisors are responsible for updating the employee's designated/non-designated status in the Human Resources Management System. It is both the employee's and supervisor's responsibility to maintain updated emergency contact information such as address, land-line phone, and/or cellular phone numbers.

      At the time of hire, all new employees are to be informed by their supervisor of their designated/non-designated status. Supervisors are responsible for maintaining up-to-date employee job descriptions and that both job descriptions and job postings include the designated/non-designated status.

      The status of non-designated employees may change as a result of the duration of the emergency event and the specific needs of their particular schools/departments/units to both maintain essential operations and to respond and restore normal University operations. It will be the supervisor's responsibility to determine if additional employees are required during this time. In such cases, supervisors may contact non-designated employees to report to work at the start of their regular work schedule or at a specified time.

   b. **Report to Work or Work Remotely:**
      During an authorized modified schedule:
      ***Designated Employees:*** Report to work on Grounds or work remotely if authorized to do so. If unable to work, immediately contact the supervisor.
      ***Non-designated Employees:*** Work remotely. This allows the University to respond to and recover from an emergency event by clearing parking lots, transferring power to essential

services, etc. If unable to work remotely for any reason during the modified schedule, contact the supervisor. Non-designated employees whose job duties can only be performed on Grounds do **not** report to work. Non-designated employees should report to work during a disruption to normal operations only if they are requested to do so by their supervisor.

| **Employee Responsibility During Modified Schedule** | |
|---|---|
| **Employee Designation** | **Modified Schedule (Delayed Opening, Early Closure, or Full Day Closure)** |
| Designated: Non-Exempt or Exempt Employees | Report to work, work remotely (if authorized to do so), or use paid leave. |
| Non-Designated: Non-Exempt or Exempt Employees | Work remotely or use paid leave. |
| Non-Designated: Non-Exempt or Exempt Employees whose job duties can only be performed on Grounds | Do not report to work. Refer to Weather or Emergency Event Status |

(Note: Information on compensation during a modified schedule can be found at Weather or Emergency Event Status.)

c. **Grace Period:**
Supervisors may allow a grace period for employees who encounter extreme transportation difficulties reporting for work as scheduled. This “grace period” will be considered time worked.

d. **Failure to Report to Work:**
Designated employees are to report to work according to their regular work schedule and location during an emergency event. If for any reason a designated employee cannot report to work at the scheduled time, the employee should immediately contact their supervisor and provide an explanation. The designated employee’s supervisor may accept this explanation or offer the employee other options such as providing transportation to pick up the employee or requiring the employee to use accrued leave, with or without pay as appropriate. When road conditions and transportation difficulties cause a designated employee to arrive late, supervisors may credit the employee for time worked and not charge the lost time to the employee’s leave balance.

Non-designated employees must report to work when requested to do so by their supervisors. Otherwise, a non-designated employee will work at home or at an alternate work location. Like a designated employee, a non-designated employee who cannot report to their regular work location, alternate work location, or cannot work at home must immediately contact the supervisor.

Designated employees and/or non-designated employees who fail to report, fail to contact their supervisor, or fail to respond to a supervisor’s request may be subject to disciplinary action.

e. **Telecommuting from Alternate Work Locations:**
Supervisors may require a non-designated employee to work from home or an alternate work location during a modified schedule, especially if the modification may last several days. Requiring

a non-designated employee to work at home or at an alternate work location will **not** change their non-designated status to designated.

f. **Expectations of Wage Employees during a Modified Schedule:**
Typically, wage employees are not required to work during emergency events. Schools/department/units should discuss University notifications as well as emergency plans and communications with individuals in these categories. In certain emergency events, schools/departments/units may elect to ask individuals to work based on their availability.

4. **Roles and Responsibilities:**

The ***employee*** is responsible for:

- Knowing and understanding their designated/non-designated status and the responsibilities thereof.
- Understanding University emergency event notification communications protocols.
- Contacting their supervisor if a designated employee is unable to report to work at the scheduled time during an emergency event.
- Contacting their supervisor if a non-designated employee is unable to work remotely during an emergency event.
- Not reporting to work if a non-designated employee's job duties can only be performed on Grounds.

The ***dean and department head*** are responsible for:

- Determining the critical operations of the school or unit.
- Designating the appropriate staff to respond and recover from an emergency event.
- Providing training so staff can appropriately respond and recover from emergency events.

The ***supervisor*** is responsible for:

- Identifying each employee as designated or non-designated and notifying the employee of their status annually.
- Conveying to each designated employee the role they are to perform in each type of emergency event as well as logistical arrangements such as parking, and whether meals, lodging, and the like will be provided.
- Conveying to non-designated employees that they are to remain at home during a modified schedule unless specifically directed to report by their immediate supervisor or others in their chain-of command/leadership.
- Conveying to non-designated employees that during a modified schedule, they are to report at the time specified (not earlier than) and depart promptly (not later than) the specific time indicated in the modified schedule announcement unless specifically directed otherwise by their immediate supervisor or others in their chain-of command/leadership.
- Exercising flexibility in granting appropriate leave and giving consideration to those employees who encounter extreme difficulties during an emergency event.
- Explaining to each employee about University modified schedule announcements and where and when to find them as well as school and/or department directives to follow.
- Adhering to Fair Labor Standards Act overtime requirements.
- Identifying and notifying employees who have the capability and type of work to work at home or at an alternate location during an emergency event.
- Including the designated/non-designated status in job descriptions and postings.
- Notifying new employees of the meaning of their designated/non-designated status.

The ***Office of University Communications*** is responsible for:

- Notifying appropriate media outlets of the University's modified schedule.

- Maintaining the University's closings and delays information hotlines, (434) 243-7669 or (434) 924-7669.

The ***Office of Emergency Management*** is responsible for:

- Working with schools/units to include announcements about changes in services and events on the University's Operations Status Board as appropriate.
- Supporting the executive vice president and chief operating officer's decision-making through information gathering and coordination with key operating units and the CIMT.
- Providing advice and guidance regarding this policy.

The ***UVA Human Resources*** is responsible for:

- Providing advice and guidance regarding this policy.
- Maintaining the official record of the employees' designated/non-designated status.
- Indicating the designated/non-designated status in employee records and elsewhere as appropriate (e.g., job postings, etc.).

5. **Compliance with Policy:**
   Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination in accordance with relevant University policies.

   Direct questions about this policy to Emergency Management (UVA) or UVA Human Resources.

**Procedures**

UVA HR Emergency Event Status Info
Critical Incident Management Plan
Weather or Emergency Event Status
UVA Alert Account Management

**Related Information**

HRM-012: Workplace Flexibility
HRM-014: Standards of Conduct for University Staff Employees
HRM-046: Overtime Management for Non-Exempt Employees

Operations Status Board: This website contains up to date information on University shift modifications, academic schedule, and modifications to other events, programs, or schedules.

State Policy:
Commonwealth's Policy 1.35 Emergency Closings
Commonwealth's Policy 1.60 Standards of Conduct
Commonwealth's Policy 4.17 Emergency/Disaster Leave
Commonwealth's Policy 4.52 Public Health Emergency Leave

**Major Category** Human Resource Management

**Next Scheduled Review** Saturday, September 8, 2029

**Revision History**

Confirmed 9/8/26; Revised 7/31/23; Added Compliance section 7/20/21; Updated 12/10/20; Updated link/title in Section 3/Procedures 5/27/20; Updated 4/17/17, 3/17/17, 11/20/13.

**Supercedes Policy Text**

Inclement Weather policy.

**Approved By** Policy Review Committee

**Approved Date** Monday, December 13, 2010