

## University Policy: University Facility and Personnel Operating Status

**Policy Category:** Operational Policies

**Subject:** Inclement Weather Closing or Delay

**Office Responsible for Review of this Policy:** Office of Finance and Treasurer

**Procedures:** [Emergency Closing/Cancellation Procedures](#), Departmental emergency operating plans

**Related University Policies:** [Accrued Sick and Safe Leave Policy](#)

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### I. SCOPE

American University (AU) may change its operating status during periods of inclement weather situation. At such times, the University has a prescribed method for evaluation and communication of these changes to AU staff, faculty, and students. Academic and administrative units are expected to abide by any decision made by central administration regarding operating status.

### II. POLICY STATEMENT

American University wishes to protect the safety of its community members, research, and facilities. To that end, University operations may close or delay due to inclement weather conditions. The decision to close or delay the University because of inclement weather will be made by the President or their designee. The Office of the Vice President of Finance and Treasurer and the department of Human Resources will handle details and questions regarding this policy.

### III. DETERMINATION OF CLOSING OR DELAY

The President of the University will decide if inclement weather conditions exist and warrant a delayed opening or a closing of the University.

In the absence of the President, the decision will be made by the Vice President of The Office of Finance and Treasurer. **A delay or closing of the University includes both classes and offices**

**(See Section VII).** The President will make the decision in consultation with the Assistant Vice President of Facilities, Executive Director of Public Safety, and the Executive Director of Risk Management based on the following information:

1. Conditions of the University roadways, sidewalks, stairs, and parking lots and the ability of Physical Plant staff to keep up with the storm.
2. Conditions of local roadways and the ability of the respective governments to keep the roads passable.
3. Weather forecasts for the next 12 hours (according to the National Weather Service).
4. Federal, state and/or county restrictions.

#### **IV. ANNOUNCEMENT OF CLOSING OR DELAY**

When an operating status decision is announced, it will apply to all activities in all University facilities, including the Main campus, WCL-Tenley campus, and other off-campus buildings. Activities at all other locations will be governed by the operating status of that location. This Policy and the decision-making process are in effect seven days a week and apply to all University activities.

American University's operating status will be communicated through RAVE text alerts, email, AU's website, social media and/or AU's telephone information line (202-885-1100). It will provide general information on the University's operating status and detailed schedule information for essential services.

To the extent possible, operating status announcements will be made no less than 1.5 hours prior to the time of scheduled classes and events so that students and employees can make appropriate arrangements (weekend class announcements follow the same guidelines as weekdays).

In the event of a University closure or delay, instruction may continue. Faculties are encouraged to arrange for alternative class-meeting modes and/or provide work for students to complete. It is recommended that faculty also include University-closure information and policies in their syllabi and have plans in place before closures or delays occur. All faculty are to respect scheduled class times when arranging for alternative class meetings or activities, whether they are virtual or in person.

During campus closures, faculty and students may continue their participation in online education. Students are expected to check for email, Blackboard, or social media updates on individual class status no later than 30 minutes before the regular class time in the event of a closure or delay.

University communications regarding closures or delays will include information about faculty and student responsibilities.

If the University has a delayed opening, classes will start at the first scheduled class time after the University has opened. Classes that start before that time will not be held.

If the University must close early, classes that are pre-empted or cut short by the closure time will not be held.

## **VI. ESSENTIAL SERVICES/FUNCTIONS**

In the event the University is closed, certain essential services/functions will still be provided. Essential functions and the personnel needed to maintain those functions are determined on a situational basis. Adjustments to schedules and services will be announced through RAVE text alerts, email, AU's website, social media and/or AU's telephone information line (202-885-1100). Each department/unit head shall designate essential functions and designate the employees to staff those functions according to the announced operating status of the University. Voice mail messages of individual department lines should be updated to reflect the operating status of that department. The supervisor in charge of a particular unit can also determine which staff are essential and provide specific instructions about when and where employees are to report for work.

Except for buildings housing essential personnel, all buildings will be closed and secured; all activities/classes will be canceled (See Section VII). AU Police Officers and Dispatchers cannot provide access for employees who do not have keys to their buildings because of their additional safety responsibilities during an inclement weather closing.

## **VII. SPECIAL EVENT PROTOCOLS**

Unless otherwise announced, all special events and extracurricular activities are canceled when the University is closed because of inclement weather conditions. Exceptions for major events can be considered on a case by case basis at the request of the University sponsor. For the purposes of this policy, a major event is defined as an event which is sponsored by AU and, by its nature, involves financial impact to the University, requires significant planning and coordination, and is time

sensitive. In these instances, the sponsor of the major event must consult with Assistant Vice President of Facilities Management to determine if adequate support and assistance can be provided for event to be safely held as scheduled. The Assistant Vice President of Facilities Management may consult with the Vice President of the Office of Finance and Treasurer, the Executive Director of University Police & Emergency Management, and the Executive Director of Risk, Safety, and Transportation Programs in considering the request.

## **VIII. LEAVE AND COMPENSATION**

Full-time staff excused due to an inclement weather closing or delay will be paid for the days and hours they were scheduled to work, at their regular rate of pay. Only those non-exempt employees categorized as essential and responding to the relevant inclement weather situation will receive an additional hour's pay for each hour worked during an inclement weather closing period. Part-time staff will not be compensated for time lost due to a closing. The effective times of closing periods are as follows:

1. Closed for the entire day – from 6:00 a.m. on the day of closing until 6:00 a.m. the following day.
2. Early closing – from the announced time of closing until 6:00 a.m. the following day.
3. Delayed opening – from 6:00 a.m. until the time of the announced opening. If a delayed opening is changed to a closing, the pay period is extended to 6:00 a.m. the following day.

NOTE: American University reserves the right to modify the Leave and Compensation portion of this Policy as it deems appropriate after considering the circumstances surrounding a specific closing situation.

## **IX. FAILURE OF CRITICAL/ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEES TO REPORT**

Full-time employees designated as critical/essential due to an inclement weather closing or delay may be excused from work subject to the provisions of the University's Accrued Sick and Safe Leave Policy.

Individuals designated as critical/essential employees may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, for willful failure to report for or remain at work during an inclement weather closing or delay. Each situation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine appropriate action.

## X. APPROVAL

This Policy is effective 04/13/2010.

This Policy was reviewed and updated 01/04/2016.

This policy needs to be signed by the appropriate officer (listed below) before it is considered approved.

Date Approved: June 1, 2016

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