

EMERGENCY BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE CLOSINGS POLICY

Category: Human Resource Management
Responsible Office: Finance and Management, VP Office

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POLICY SUMMARY

This policy identifies the procedures followed during snow emergencies and other extraordinary circumstances and enumerates the leave procedures.

POLICY

Policy Statement

Offices and other facilities operated by the State of New York may be closed only by order of the Governor. Although pursuant to NYS Executive Law, Article 2-B, a Chief Executive of a county, city or village may declare a state of emergency, such declaration has no authority over the closure of state offices or facilities.

However, the Buffalo State College president or his/her designee has the authority to declare a weather emergency and cancel classes and institute a temporary liberal leave policy. Further, the president or designee may recommend that all but essential-critical employees not report to work. Essential-critical employees must remain on duty to perform responsibilities related to the emergency itself, or to provide services or care to students, and must make every effort to report to work to avoid interruption of essential services.

Employees designated as essential-remote and non-essential who do not report for work must notify their supervisors of their planned absence and their intention to use leave credits, as appropriate.

The president has delegated the authority to cancel classes to the vice president for finance and management. The University Police Department is responsible for monitoring relevant weather conditions and reporting to the vice president for finance and management.

Applicability

This policy applies to all New York State employees. As a non-public employer, the Research Foundation and Buffalo State College Foundation are not covered by the state's emergency policy but treat employees on the campus similarly to SUNY employees with respect to closings, directed absences and accruals in snow and other emergency situations.

Definitions

Directed Absence: Any employee who has reported to work and because of extraordinary circumstances beyond the employee's control (e.g., extremely hazardous conditions or physical plant breakdown) is directed by the college president or his/her designee to leave work shall not be required to charge this absence to leave accruals. Any such release of employees shall not create the right to equivalent time off for employees who are not directed to leave work.

Supervisors, regardless of their good intentions, may not direct such absences.

Essential-Critical Employees: Essential-critical services are those that must be maintained to ensure the well-being and protection of those who reside on campus, as well as the maintenance and security of college property. Essential-critical employees are those whose duties and responsibilities are considered mandatory for carrying out operational or life-safety services for Buffalo State College, including the continued mission-critical functioning of academic, enrollment management and scholarly research activities.

The following functions are considered essential-critical. Employees assigned to these areas are required to report to work or to remain at work to undertake responsibilities related to the emergency itself, or to provide services or care to students under emergency conditions:

1. Custodial Services Department
2. Dean of Students' Office
3. Environmental Health and Safety Office (designated staff only)
4. Grounds and Garage Department (designated staff only)
5. Facilities Business Operations and Services
6. Facilities Design and Construction Office (designated staff only)
7. Facilities Department
8. Information Technology Department (designated staff only)
9. Residence Life Office (designated staff only)
10. Stores and Mail Operations (designated staff only)
11. University Police Department
12. Weigel Wellness Center (designated staff only)
13. Staff responsible for the care and feeding of animals or maintenance of greenhouse facilities

All employees who are designated as essential-critical will be notified in writing by their department heads.

Essential-Remote Employees: Those whose job functions are essential to the effective operation of Buffalo State College and who are involved in emergency response. Essential-remote employees may be able to report to a remote location to perform their job duties.

Non-Essential Service Employees: Those employees who do not need to be physically present to perform their job functions, or are not required in order for Buffalo State to perform its core functions during the emergency.

Procedure

If the decision to declare a weather emergency and cancel classes is made before the start of the workday, the vice president for finance and management will inform the University Police Department and the Marketing and Communications Office.

If the decision to close and/or cancel is made once classes are in session, the vice president for finance and management will consult with the provost and vice president for academic affairs and notify the University Police Department and Marketing and Communications Office of the decision.

In either case, the Marketing and Communications Office will activate the Buff State Alert emergency notification system, send a campus-wide e-mail, share notifications via the college's Facebook and Twitter accounts, and notify select radio and television stations including WBEN- AM 930, WBFO-FM 88.7, WKSE-FM 98.5, STAR-FM 102.5, WGRZ-TV Ch. 2, WIVB-TV Ch. 4, WKBW-TV Ch. 7, and Spectrum Cable.

An early decision to declare a weather emergency and cancel classes will be communicated by about 6:00 a.m. For information concerning cancellation of classes, please check the main [Buffalo State website](#) or call the school closing information number, (716) 878-5000.

For employees who elect to report for work under emergency conditions, parking may be severely restricted during periods of temporary emergency. Employees who report to work under these conditions should park in any lot that has been cleared of snow. Employees should report to regular work locations and perform regular duties, even if their supervisor is absent. If the employee's regular work location is not accessible, he/she must report to the Director of Facilities, Clinton Center, ext. 6111, or the director of Residence Life, Porter Hall, ext. 3000, for an alternate work location and assignment.

Attendance Policy under Emergency Conditions

If classes are canceled before the workday begins, employees designated essential-critical are required to report. Non-essential and essential-remote employees who choose not to or are unable to must charge the absence to appropriate leave accruals. Employees must consult with their supervisors on all such decisions.

An employee who reports to work but feels the worsening weather conditions may threaten his/her ability to return home safely may request permission from his/her supervisor to leave the campus early and charge such missed time to appropriate accruals.

Employees who elect to come to work may do so; however, the college cannot guarantee that they will be able to work at their usual locations or perform their normal duties.

Should the declaration of a weather emergency occur during the workday, the vice president for finance and management will convey the decision to the President's Cabinet members who will ensure that the announcement is communicated throughout their respective areas. Essential-critical employees are required to remain on the job or report to work as scheduled in this instance. Following official declaration of a weather emergency, employees may leave their work sites and charge the remainder of their workdays to appropriate leave accruals; or continue working until their regular departure time.

Absences that result from the cancellation of classes and services must be charged to appropriate leave accruals as follows:

1. Vacation, personal, compensatory, or holiday leave
2. Sick leave, but only in event of personal or family illness
3. Leave without pay (A written request must be submitted to the Human Resource Management Office no later than the end of the pay period in which the attendance record is due.)

RELATED INFORMATION

Related Links:

[Buff State Alert](#)

[New York State Attendance and Leave Manual Section 21.7](#)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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REVISION HISTORY

Date of change: 12/06/2021

Brief description of edit: Minor revisions made to reflect current policy and procedure.

Date of change: 12/01/2020

Brief description of edit: Adjusted the policy to accommodate alternate work location agreements and the potential for continued teaching, learning and working via remote methods

Date of change: 11/10/2017

Brief description of edit: Minor revisions to reflect current organizational structure

Date of change: 03/27/2015

Brief description of edit: Adapted to standard template. Minor revisions to reflect current procedure.

APPROVAL

Approved prior to 2016