

Office Closings

Responsible Office:
VCU Human Resources

POLICY STATEMENT AND PURPOSE

The complexity of Virginia Commonwealth University's operations requires certain essential services to be provided in times of inclement weather and in emergency conditions. This policy achieves the following purposes:

- a) Allows supervisors and managers to designate personnel to work when the University is closed officially.
- b) Provides a uniform method of handling employee absences and pay continuity during this time.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS POLICY

All faculty and staff should read this policy.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

State Policy 1.35, Emergency Closings

CONTACTS

VCU Human Resources officially interprets this policy and shall revise or eliminate any or all parts as necessary to meet the changing needs of Virginia Commonwealth University. Please direct policy questions to VCU Human Resources.

Initial Policy Approved: 12/1/93
Revision History: 12/1/97
11/1/00
1/1/04
11/1/06

Last Revised 1/16/09

DEFINITIONS

Designated Employees

Employees identified by the employing department as required to work during authorized closings.

PROCEDURES

Closing Decisions

The decision to close due to inclement weather or emergency conditions is made by the President of Virginia Commonwealth University. The President will consult with senior management to recommend a course of action and to communicate the decision to a representative of University News Services. University News Services will communicate immediate closing status information through a variety of ways: radio and television stations, VCU Alert website, inclement weather hotline, text messaging, VCU email accounts, and digital screens in major academic buildings and all residence halls on both campuses as appropriate.

Late-opening and closing announcements for state government do not apply to Virginia Commonwealth University. A separate announcement will be made about any changes in VCU's normal operating status that will include the Monroe Park and MCV Campuses. Employees of the VCU Health System follow a separate inclement weather procedure.

Annual Notice

Information about the University's inclement weather operating plans and parking locations will be communicated to employees every fall. New employees will receive this information during the orientation process. Policy and procedure information also are posted on the VCU and Human Resource websites.

Personnel Who Work Outside of the Day Shift

All employees on shifts following a late opening or closing must report to work as scheduled unless additional announcements are made for their particular shifts.

Designated Employees

Closings normally will be caused by transportation difficulties, and the number of employees required to report for work should be limited to those persons considered necessary to perform the most critical tasks.

- Many University operating units may not need to designate employees.
- Blanket designations are discouraged and require prior approval of the President of the University.

Each division, department, or operating unit should inform designated employees in writing annually that they must work during authorized closings.

Leave Reporting and Other Personnel Actions

Designated and non-designated employees who are on approved leave at the time of an authorized closing will not have their leave balances charged. Employees are not credited with compensatory leave if the University closes on their rest days.

Designated employees:

- will be credited with compensatory leave for hours worked if they work their normal shift during an authorized closing;
- will be compensated according to the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) if they are required to work more hours than a normal shift;
- must charge time missed to accrued leave or leave without pay as appropriate if they do not report to work as scheduled;
- will not be required to work during an authorized closing if they are on short-term disability leave under the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program (VSDP); and
- are expected to report to work even if the authorized closing day is their first workday. If they do not report to work, their effective date of employment will be the first day actually worked.

Non-designated employees:

- will be paid for absences caused by an authorized closing (to qualify for payment, non-designated employees must work or be on approved leave the workday before and the workday after the authorized closing);
- may apply accrued leave or leave without pay as appropriate if they are not eligible for payment;
- are not normally credited with compensatory leave, except in extenuating circumstances and with approval of the department head, if they report to work as a result of not having heard the closing announcement;
- will continue to receive appropriate benefits according to VSDP guidelines if they are on short-term disability leave; and
- will receive pay for the authorized closing day if they are scheduled to begin work that day and if the following full day is worked.

Twelve-month faculty:

- These faculty are eligible to accrue compensatory leave during inclement weather closings if that same leave is granted for other non-designated staff.

Partial Shift Closings

When inclement weather conditions cause a change in the work schedule, such as a late opening or early closing, employees will be paid for authorized absences. To qualify for payment, employees must work or be on approved leave the day before and the day after the authorized change in normal business operations. Any hours not worked while the agency was open for a partial shift must be charged to accrued leave or leave without pay.

Separate Campus or Abbreviated Plan Closings

When inclement weather conditions cause one campus to remain open while another closes, employees will follow the announcement instructions that affect the campus on which they are housed or to which they primarily report.

Separate Building Closing

When certain conditions cause a building to close (i.e., air conditioning is inoperable in extreme heat), the appropriate building manager, dean, or department head will coordinate the closing with the appropriate Vice President who will

notify the VCU Incident Commander and Human Resources (and University News Services, as needed).

Human Resources will communicate the leave process to the timekeeper(s).

Late Arrivals

Inclement weather conditions may create transportation difficulties resulting in employees arriving late to work. If directors or department heads determine that the lost time was justifiable because of weather conditions, this lost time need not be applied to leave balances nor should employees experience loss of pay.

New Employees

If an entire shift closing occurs on the first workday in a pay period when an employee is scheduled to begin employment on that day, the absence will be covered by this policy and the first day of the pay period still will be listed as the new employee's first day of employment.

Snow Removal and Parking Assignments

Facilities Management will remove snow from University-owned streets, sidewalks, and parking lots. Department managers should forward priorities and special requests to that office.

To help manage the snow removal process, designated personnel who hold valid decals will park in specific locations.