



VCU

Office Closings

Policy Type: Administrative
Responsible Office: VCU Human Resources
Initial Policy Approved: 12/01/93
Current Revision Approved: 08/21/2012

Policy Statement and Purpose

The complexity of operations at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) requires certain essential services be provided in times of inclement weather and in emergency conditions. This policy achieves the following purposes in that it:

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

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Who Should Know This Policy

All faculty and staff are responsible for knowing this policy and familiarizing themselves with its contents and provisions.

Definitions ---

Designated Employees

This term refers to employees identified by the employing department as required to work during authorized closings.

Contacts ---

VCU Human Resources officially interprets this policy and is responsible for obtaining approval for any revisions as required by the policy *Creating and Maintaining Policies and Procedures* through the appropriate governance structures. Please direct policy questions to VCU Human Resources.

Procedures ---

- 1. Closing Decisions:** The decision to close due to inclement weather or emergency conditions is made by VCU's Vice President for Finance and Administration. The vice president will consult with senior management to recommend a course of action and to communicate the decision to a representative of University News Services, who 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, VCU social media (Twitter and Facebook) and digital screens in major academic buildings and all residence halls on both campuses as appropriate.

Late-opening and special or early closing announcements for state government do not apply to VCU. A separate announcement will be made about any changes in the university'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.

- 2. 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.
- 3. 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.
- 4. 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.

- 5. 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 regular scheduled days off.

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.

Note: Leave processing for closings that occur on weekends or for employees who do not work a traditional workweek (Monday through Friday) is more complex. Timekeepers should consult with VCU Human Resources' Leave Administration for guidance.

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:

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

6. **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.
7. **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.
8. **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).

9. **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.
10. **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.
11. **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.

Forms

There are no forms associated with this policy and procedures.

Related Documents

1. State Policy 1.35, Emergency Closings
http://www.dhrm.state.va.us/hrpolicy/web/pol1_35.html

Revision History

This policy supersedes the following archived policies:

February 16, 2010 *Office Closings*

FAQs

There are no FAQs associated with this policy and procedures.