



**Facilities Management (FM)
Essential Employees & Inclement Weather**
(and other Declared Emergency Conditions)

Reminder/Refresher!*

FM Essential Employee phone line: (301) 405-1999

Essential Employees provide a valuable and critical role in helping the University meet its mission of education and research. We rely heavily on Essential Employees to keep our campus open and safe for business whenever possible. As such, the campus, and FM, have procedures and guidelines in place that apply to inclement weather and other declared emergencies. **If you are an Essential Employee for weather/systems outage purposes, below you will find a summary of applicable guidelines.** If you have any questions about your essential status, reach out to FMHR or your supervisor Today!!

■ **Essential Employee Categories:**

- **Catastrophic:** Employees who are subject to being required to work to maintain continuity of University services in the event of a major event, usually the result of an external force such as natural disaster, pandemic outbreaks, etc. or other catastrophic event for the University. For certain positions, work may be able to be completed remotely.
- **Weather/Other:** Employees who are subject to being required to work because of weather or operational emergencies such as snow removal, flooding, electrical outages, etc.
- **Catastrophic & Weather/Other:** Employees who are subject to being required to work to maintain continuity of University services in the event of any major catastrophic event AND who are also subject to being required to work because of weather or operational emergencies. For certain positions, work may be able to be completed remotely.
- **Not Applicable:** None of the above circumstances apply to the position.

- Being Essential, as referenced in this document, means you are expected to report to work as usual when the campus is closed due to a Declared Emergency Condition or when called in to work emergency overtime. When the campus is closed, and non-essential staff are granted Administrative Leave, nonexempt Essential Employees (who report to work as required) shall be compensated with Administrative Leave for the portion of their regularly scheduled shift that was covered by the Declared Emergency Condition, *in addition to compensation for hours worked*. The additional hours worked shall be compensated in accordance with the employee's overtime payment status and relevant policy.
- In some instances, Essential Employees may be instructed NOT to report to work. In that case, they are removed from their Essential capacity *for that event only* and only then would be eligible for Administrative Leave as granted to non-essential staff. *Not all Essential Employees have the same responsibilities, make sure you understand your role – ask your supervisor.*
- Essential Employees on pre-approved leave at the time the campus is closed for a Declared Weather or Systems Emergency, whether it be Annual, Sick, Personal, Compensatory leave or approved leave without pay, are considered to be in a "prior leave status" and shall have their leave charged according to the pre-scheduled day(s) in question. *Essential Employees in a prior leave status shall not receive Administrative Leave.*
- Because Essential Employees are expected to report to work during snow and other Declared Emergency Conditions, **FM protocol prohibits the use of Time and Attendance Exceptions.** Under most circumstances, an Essential Employee who calls in and indicates that they will not be coming to work will have their absence recorded as Unauthorized. Any Disciplinary Exception to this rule must be approved by the AD or Director. If an exception is granted, Essential Employees are ineligible to use Administrative Leave; they must use their own accrued leave.
- If an employee has an exemption from snow removal due to medical reasons, updated documentation must be provided at least annually. If an employee has a medical exemption for snow removal, they will not be required to report to work when campus is closed or delayed due to snow/ice conditions. For that event, they will be deemed nonessential.
- Although there may be occasions when an Essential Employee may need to call in and request sick leave during a Declared Emergency, when this occurs, employees may need to provide medical documentation for their absence, *regardless of their leave record* (unless the absence is a part of a continuing absence due to illness/injury). The need for medical documentation will be based on whether the workday is declared to involve emergency conditions, i.e., it does not matter if the employee called in prior to the declaration of the emergency condition. **Employees who are ill on a day an emergency is declared should expect that they may be required to provide medical documentation for their absence.** Medical documentation *must be provided within three workdays of the employee's return* to their next regularly scheduled shift, unless the employee is on a pre-existing requirement requiring them to produce the documentation immediately upon their return to work. *Unless otherwise indicated, activities in response to inclement weather conditions (such as snow removal) will always be deemed emergency conditions.*

**This summary sheet is as a reminder of existing policies, procedures, and guidelines. It is not intended to replace or be interpreted as a policy source document.*