



Institutional Handbook of Operating Procedures

Policy 3.1.1

Section: Human Resources Policies	Responsible Vice President: Executive Vice President, Business & Finance
Subject: General	Responsible Entity: Human Resources

I. Title

Staffing During [Adverse Conditions](#)

II. Policy

- A. To aid in the speed and efficiency of the institution to deal with [adverse conditions](#), all benefit eligible UTMB employees will be designated as [essential](#) or [non-essential](#) personnel. This is necessary because many institutional services, including UTMB hospitals, UTMB Emergency Department, Business Operations and Facilities, and Security may require 24-hour staffing even during adverse conditions when routine operations are officially suspended and emergency status is declared. Under these circumstances, all essential employees are expected to report to, and/or remain at work to sustain services, and/or to protect the institution's assets. Employees may be asked to perform duties outside their normal job responsibilities if conditions warrant. Although each situation is somewhat unique, these guidelines are established to ensure consistency and fairness regarding staffing and compensation. UTMB administration reserves the right to evaluate and modify this policy.

- B. Overall guidance procedures during an emergency status can be found in the [Institutional Emergency Operations Plan](#).

- C. Entering Emergency Status
 - 1. UTMB enters emergency status when the President or designee(s) suspends routine operations. Since the location of an adverse condition may vary, no UTMB facility, clinic, unit, or other work unit will suspend routine operations until such declaration is made by the President or designee.
 - 2. Based on the nature of the emergency, the affected UTMB facilities will be defined as close to the time of the event as practical. UTMB facilities in non-affected areas will continue with routine operations. Human Resources will work with the President, Incident Commander, or designee and Payroll Services to identify locations affected by the emergency.

- D. Many labs have the flexibility to begin a scale back effort prior to a decision to suspend routine operations if a major storm is threatening. Lab personnel may be reassigned to other work locations pending the implementation of an emergency plan. Decisions regarding lab operations and reassigning personnel should be made with recommendations from the Principal Investigator and approval of the appropriate entity leader.

- E. During adverse weather conditions, it is UTMB Health's intention to remain open to serve our

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patients who depend upon our services. It is expected that employees, including all faculty and staff, will make every reasonable effort to arrive at work without putting themselves at unreasonable risk. Adverse travel conditions may arise with or without notice. Employees should use good judgment to safely arrive for their designated shifts. Employees should coordinate personal schedules to anticipate traffic delays due to road closures and/or hazardous driving conditions.

- F. When adverse travel conditions exist or may be anticipated, employees who are already at work must remain until they are relieved. When relieved from duty, employees should use good judgment to travel safely to their next destination.
- G. If it is determined that the employee or supervisor failed to comply with this policy, the employee or supervisor may be subjected to disciplinary action, up to and including termination in accordance with the provisions of the IHOP Policy 3.1.9, [Discipline, Dismissal and Appeal for Classified Employees](#).

III. Emergency Classifications

- A. Note: UTMB is not a shelter for employees or their dependents during an adverse condition. Employees released from work are encouraged to follow instructions as issued by their local jurisdiction.
- B. If routine operations continue (i.e., emergency status is not declared) during an adverse condition, all employees are expected to report to and/or remain at work as scheduled or as instructed by their supervisor.

IV. Assignment of Emergency Classifications

- A. At the time of hire, each new employee will be informed of his or her classification as either [essential](#) or [non-essential](#), and the supervisor will discuss the responsibilities of an essential employee and the employee's ability to fulfill those responsibilities. The supervisor must inform the employee of the employee's role in an emergency and to whom the employee should report in an emergency. If an essential employee is unable to fulfill the necessary responsibilities for any reason, the supervisor will determine whether the emergency classification may be changed based on departmental needs.
- B. If necessary to support business operations prior to, during, or after an emergency situation, department leadership, the President, Incident Commander, or designee may change the essential or non-essential personnel designation previously made by department leadership.
- C. Supervisors will review emergency classifications annually with each employee and document the employees' understanding of their responsibilities in the event of an adverse condition. The supervisor must inform the employee of any changes in the employee's emergency role, or to whom the employee reports in an emergency. Employees are expected to notify their supervisors immediately if situations arise that would prohibit them from being able to fulfill their responsibilities as an essential employee. **This notification is expected to be prior to the declaration of emergency status.**

V. Time Reporting & Compensation

- A. During an adverse condition, time worked must be recorded electronically in KRONOS as long

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as the system is accessible either via telephone or manual input by timekeeper. If electronic time systems are no longer accessible, it is the responsibility of on-site managers to administer paper time documentation to be turned in to Payroll Services at the conclusion of the adverse condition. However, it remains the employee's responsibility to track and document his or her own time in the event the system is not working. In cases where electronic time systems are no longer accessible and the Incident Command is activated, paper time sheets (eg HICS Form 252 or equivalent) will be delivered to the Time Unit Leader within the Finance Administration Section of the Incident Command daily or as directed by the Finance / Administration Section Chief.

- B.** If emergency status **has not been declared**, time for an employee who reports late, does not report, or leaves for any reason will be charged against their earned accruals or leave without pay.
Employees on previously requested leave who are unable to return to work when the emergency status is declared shall remain on the leave status previously requested for the duration of the leave request period. If unable to return to work after the previously scheduled time off due to the worksite being closed, emergency leave will be granted up to forty hours scheduled work time.
- C.** Essential non-exempt employees who are required to remain and work after emergency status is declared will be paid for all time that the employee is required to remain on site, including any applicable overtime.
- D.** Exempt employees who are required to remain at a designated work site during an emergency will be paid their regular salary. If exempt employees are required to spend the night on site they will receive their regular salary and may receive a lump sum additional duty payment. The actual amount of the lump sum payment will be determined based on the nature and duration of the emergency event.
- E.** Non-essential employees released when emergency status is declared will be given paid emergency leave for up to forty hours scheduled work time. If for any reason the employee remains unable to return to work after forty hours of emergency leave, the remaining time off work will be charged against their applicable accruals or leave without pay. The 40 hour emergency leave maximum applies to each time an emergency event is declared.
- F.** When appropriate, managers may reassign non-exempt employees to work from home or an alternate location. Employees working from home or alternate locations must have the prior approval of their supervisor, and the work must be necessary to further the mission of UTMB. Non-exempt employees working from home or an alternative work location must comply with the time reporting requirements in Section V.
- G.** Employees working from home or alternative worksites without approval from their supervisor will be paid for time worked but may be subject to disciplinary action.

VI. Leaving Work

- A.** Following official notice that routine operations have been suspended, supervisors will release [non-essential](#) and [essential](#) employees not needed at that time. Supervisors will inform those employees about expected responsibilities related to their return to UTMB after the emergency situation ends. No employee is to leave without notifying their immediate supervisor.

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Department directors are responsible for ensuring adequate and appropriate coverage for their area and for having a communication plan to reach staff both on and off-site as needed. During adverse conditions, before emergency status has been declared and if work schedules permit, non-essential employees may be granted **vacation at the discretion of the supervisor. A supervisor may not grant emergency leave to any employee prior to the official release communicated by the President or designee.** Upon official release of personnel following suspension of routine operations, such employees will be given emergency leave for the remainder of their scheduled work hours that shift.

- B. Emergency leave is granted only if the worksite itself is designated as being in “emergency status” and non-essential employees have been released.** If the worksite is not considered to be under “emergency status” and employees are unable to report to work due to such things as road conditions or other factors, leave time will be charged to applicable accruals or leave without pay. This leave will **not** be considered to be unscheduled.

VII. Monitoring Emergency Status

- A.** When adverse conditions occur, UTMB Marketing and Communications, with monitoring assistance from the Campus Police, and working on behalf of the President or his/her designee, will provide regular condition updates via the university’s telephone, web, and/or email systems, depending on functionality at any given time during the emergency.
- B.** The Alert Line may be reached by calling (409) 77-ALERT [772-5378] or toll free (888) 772-5449. Alert information is also posted on the [UTMB Alert Page](#) and on the [university homepage](#). When routine operations have been suspended (i.e., emergency status is declared) by the President or designee(s), Marketing and Communications will issue a notice of staffing status via the Alert Line, the Alert Page, the university homepage, emergency broadcast e-mail, and/or other functioning communications vehicles as appropriate. These should be employees' primary sources of information specifically regarding UTMB’s emergency status. Public Affairs will issue timely notice of staffing status to area news media and appropriate internal communication vehicles.
- C.** Department heads/chairs will instruct their employees to monitor the Alert Line, web site, broadcast e-mail, or other UTMB communication vehicles to follow the status of the institution during adverse conditions. On an annual basis, Public Affairs will inform employees via appropriate internal communication vehicles about resources for UTMB-specific information about adverse conditions. This information also will be conveyed to new employees during orientation.
- D.** Employees not at work are responsible for monitoring the above information sources and for returning to work at the time instructed by official UTMB sources, including their individual supervisors. Employees unable to return to work at the time instructed are responsible for contacting their supervisors immediately regarding their status and expected time of return. Employees not returning at the time instructed will have their absence charged to appropriate leave accruals or leave without pay. Supervisors may not grant additional emergency leave without the approval of their entity leader and the President.

VIII. Returning to Work

- A.** The President or designee(s) will determine when routine operations are to resume.

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- B.** When routine operations resume, non-essential employees must report to work on their regularly scheduled shifts. Departments unable to resume routine operations at designated time must notify their entity leader and the President or Incident Commander immediately. Supervisors are responsible for accounting for the status of all departmental employees and communicating that status to Human Resources.

IX. Off Campus Locations

- A.** When emergency status is necessary at an off-campus location and employees must be released, the department head for that location must notify the entity leader, Human Resources Department and the UTMB Incident Command (if activated).
- B.** Failure of an employee or supervisor to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination in accordance with the provisions of the IHOP 3.1.9, [Discipline, Dismissal and Appeal for Classified Employees](#).

X. Definitions

Adverse condition: inclement weather or other factors which have an actual or potential disruptive effect on institutional operations (e.g., hurricanes, utility interruptions, floods, etc.).

Essential (“E”): employees with specific responsibilities before, during or after a declared emergency. All employees can be classified essential depending on the needs of the University. These responsibilities may include but are not limited to the following:

- Remain at worksite during the emergency
- Accompany patients to another location and provide care at that location until notified to return to UTMB Galveston
- Return immediately after the emergency to relieve those who were assigned to stay
- Work at an alternate location if assigned during or after the emergency
- Come to work during scheduled time off if requested

Non-Essential (“N”): employees whose presence is not essential during a declared emergency status, but who cannot leave until released by supervisor and must return to work as conditions permit. Non-benefit eligible employees should be classified as non-essential and will not be eligible for Emergency Leave.

XI. Related UTMB Policies and Procedures

IHOP 7.1.8, [Student Release During Adverse Environmental Conditions](#)

XII. Additional References

UTMB Alert Page <http://intranet.utmb.edu/alert/>

UTMB home page <http://www.utmb.edu>

XIII. Dates Approved or Amended

<i>Originated: 3/22/1991</i>	
<i>Reviewed with Changes</i>	<i>Reviewed without Changes</i>
8/4/2011	
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XIV. Contact Information

Human Resources

(409) 772-8699