Staffing During Adverse Conditions

**Audience**
This policy applies to all UTMB benefit-eligible employees.

**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.).

“E” – *ESSENTIAL*: employees with specific responsibilities during or after a declared emergency. These responsibilities may include but are not limited to the following:

- Remain at worksite during 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.

“N” – *NONESSENTIAL*: 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 usual under routine operations after emergency status has ended.

**Policy**
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 nonessential personnel. This is necessary because many institutional services, including UTMB hospitals, UTMB Emergency Department, Facilities Operations and Management and Security may require 24-hour staffing even during adverse conditions when it may become necessary to officially suspend routine operations and move to emergency status. 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. 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. Overall guidance procedures during an emergency status can be found in the *Institutional Emergency Operations Plan*. UTMB enters emergency status when the Institutional Emergency Preparedness Officer (IEPO) 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 IEPO or designee.

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.

Failure of an employee or supervisor to comply with this policy may produce an investigation that may result in disciplinary action, to include termination in accordance with the provisions of the IHOP Policy 3.10.1, Discipline and Dismissal.

**Emergency Classifications**

Although every employee shall be designated as either *Essential* or *Non-essential*, all employees can be classified *Essential* depending on the needs of the University.

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 Emergency Management Office.

Non-benefit eligible employees should be classified as non-essential and will not be eligible for Administrative Leave.

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.

**Assignment of Emergency Classifications**

At the time of hire each new employee will be informed of their 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. If an “Essential” employee is unable to fulfill the necessary responsibilities for any reason the supervisor will evaluate if the emergency classification may be changed. The decision of whether to change the classification to “Non-essential” is based on departmental needs.

If necessary to support business operations prior to, during, or after an emergency situation, the Institutional Emergency Preparedness Officer or designee may change the Essential or Nonessential personnel designation previously made by department management.

Supervisors will review emergency classifications annually with each employee and document the employees’ understanding of their responsibilities in the event of an adverse condition. 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.
Time Reporting

During an adverse condition, the following guidelines apply regarding time reporting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>During an adverse condition when routine operations continue (i.e., emergency status is NOT declared), time for…</th>
<th>Will be recorded as…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any employee who reports late, does not report, or leaves for any reason related to the adverse condition (e.g., due to school closures, stalled cars, etc.),</td>
<td>An absence charged to earn leave (e.g., vacation or compensatory time) or leave without pay for the time not worked.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>During a declared emergency status, time for…</th>
<th>Will be recorded as…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Essential</strong> employees who remain and work or who come in to work from previously scheduled leave or day off and remain on UTMB property or in UTMB facilities during the event.</td>
<td>Regular time for the hours worked and overtime if applicable for those essential employees who normally receive overtime. If required to stay overnight, compensatory time will be given as the rate of 1.5 hour for the remainder of the 24 hour day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Essential or Nonessential</strong> employees on previously requested leave or regular day off and unable to report to work.</td>
<td>Essential employees who normally do not receive overtime will be paid their regular salary and if required to remain overnight will receive 12 hours compensatory time. Compensatory time must be taken within one year from the date accrued at a time mutually agreed upon by the employee and the supervisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nonessential</strong> employees released by their supervisor.</td>
<td>Previously requested time or regular day off shall be used. If unable to return to work after previously scheduled time off, emergency leave will be granted for the scheduled work time for the duration of the emergency status.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Leaving Work

Following official notice that routine operations have been suspended, supervisors will release their “Nonessential” and any “Essential” employees **not needed at that time**. Supervisors will inform all “essential” employees that are being released about expected responsibilities related to return to UTMB after the emergency situation ends. No employee is to leave without notifying their immediate supervisor. Department directors are responsible for assuring adequate
and appropriated coverage for their area and for having a communication plan to reach staff both on and off-site as needed.

During adverse conditions, if work schedules permit, “Nonessential” 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 IEPO 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. Emergency leave is granted only if the worksite itself is designated as being in “emergency status.”

**Monitoring Emergency Status**

When adverse conditions occur, the office of University Advancement (OUA), with monitoring assistance from the Campus Police and working on behalf of the IEPO or his/her designee, will provide regular condition updates via the university’s telephone, web and email systems. The telephone “Alert Line” may be reached by calling (409) 77-ALERT [772-5378] or toll free at (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 IEPO or designee(s), OUA will issue notice of staffing status via the Alert Line, the web page, and emergency broadcast e-mail. These should be employees’ primary sources of information. OUA also will issue timely notice of staffing status to area news media and through the campus television monitor system.

Department heads/chairs will instruct their employees to call the Alert Line, check the website, or listen to designated media to follow the status of the institution during adverse conditions. On an annual basis, OUA will inform employees via **Impact**, broadcast campus e-mail, website postings and notices to department heads/chairs of the area broadcast media stations to tune to for information in the event of adverse conditions. This information also will be conveyed to new employees during orientation.

Employees not at work are responsible for monitoring the above information sources and for returning to work at the time instructed by these sources. 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 time instructed will have their absence charge to appropriate leave accruals or leave without pay. Supervisors may not grant additional emergency leave without approval of entity leader and IEPO.

**Returning to Work**

The IEPO or designee(s) will determine when routine operations are to resume. When routine operations resume, “Nonessential” 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 IEPO immediately.

**Off Campus Locations**

UTMB locations away from the main campus in Galveston shall have emergency plans specific to their location and those plans are submitted to the IEPO in Galveston for approval and inclusion in the Institutional Emergency Operations Plan. 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 and the IEPO.

Failure of an employee or supervisor to comply with this policy may produce an investigation which may result in disciplinary action, to include termination in accordance with the provisions of the Policy 3.10.1, *Discipline and Dismissal*.

**Reference**

OP 7.1.8, *Student Release During Emergency Weather*  
UTMB Alert Page [http://intranet.utmb.edu/alert/](http://intranet.utmb.edu/alert/)  
UTMB home page [http://www.utmb.edu](http://www.utmb.edu)

This form documents the approval and history of the policies and procedures for the Pulmonary Function Laboratory. The Medical Director signs all policies verifying initial approval. Annually thereafter, the Director and/or designee may approve reviews and revisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Approved by:</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 11/07 | V. Cardenas, MD  
Medical Director Pulmonary Laboratory | |
| 6/09  | V. Cardenas, MD  
No changes to the policy | |
| 7/10  | V. Cardenas, MD  
No changes to the policy | |
| 8/11  | V. Cardenas, MD | |
| 2/12  | A. Duarte, MD  
Medical Director Pulmonary Function Laboratory  
No changes to the policy | |
| 5/14  | A. Duarte, MD  
Medical Director Pulmonary Function Laboratory  
No changes to the policy | |