



NORTHWESTERN
UNIVERSITY

Responsible University Official: Senior Vice President for Business and Finance, Provost
Responsible Office: Office of Human Resources
Origination Date: August 11, 2014

Employees in Essential Functions and Positions

Policy Statement

This policy sets forth a framework for departments and schools to utilize in determining those employees who work in functions and positions that are essential during a campus emergency. These employees provide services needed to maintain or protect the health, safety, or wellbeing of the University community, ensure continuity of key operations, and preserve and protect University property.

Reason for Policy/Purpose

This policy provides guidance to departments and schools regarding the identification and management of employees whose services are needed during campus emergencies, including those emergencies that require suspension of services and/or closure of operations, and outlines management of related administrative matters during such emergencies.

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Who Approved This Policy

Senior Vice President for Business and Finance
Provost

Who Needs to Know This Policy

All Northwestern University Faculty and Staff and their supervisors

Website Address for This Policy

<http://policies.northwestern.edu/>

<http://www.northwestern.edu/hr/>

<http://www.northwestern.edu/up/emergency/index.html>

Contacts

If you have any questions on the Employees in Essential Functions and Positions Policy, you may:

1. Call the Office of Human Resources in Evanston at 847- 491-7507 or Chicago at 312 -503-8481, or
 2. Send an e-mail to hrweb@northwestern.edu
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Definitions

Word:

Definition:

Emergency

Any unscheduled disruption of Northwestern University's operations due to events such as (but not limited to) inclement weather, a natural or man-made disaster, the outbreak of pandemic illnesses, and/or any other unforeseen circumstances, including instances requiring suspension of services and/or closure of operations.

Essential position

A position that has been designated as essential during a campus emergency, including an emergency closure. A position may be designated as essential at any point during an emergency, even if not designated as essential prior to the emergency.

Essential function

A functional area or department within the University that has been designated as essential during a campus emergency, including an emergency closure. A function may be designated as essential at any point during an emergency, even if not designated as essential prior to the emergency.

Policy/Procedures

This policy is intended to assist departments and schools in identifying employees in essential functions or positions whose services are required during a campus emergency. Each department and school is responsible for determining which functions in the unit are essential, and how to staff those functions during an emergency or suspension of normal operations. Once the emergency staffing plan is in place, the department or school leader is responsible for communicating the expectations and requirements to the identified individuals. Generally, employees in essential functions and positions are required to report to their designated work location to ensure the operation of essential services during an emergency or when University operations have been suspended. However, there are some individuals who may be permitted to perform essential services remotely. In those limited cases, these individuals will be identified in advance and notified by their supervisors.

Employees in essential functions and positions are expected to come to work in emergency situations unless specifically excused by their supervisor. Failure to report for work as directed and to maintain work responsibilities during an emergency may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Following is a list of identified functions or departments that are considered essential and critical to emergency operations at the University. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive and may change based on the specific circumstances of the event disrupting normal business operations. Not all positions in these units may be considered essential, for the purposes of this policy.

- Athletics & Recreation
- Center for Comparative Medicine (CCM)
- Emergency Response Team
- Emergency Management
- Dining Services
- Facilities Management
- Financial Operations
- Health Services
- Human Resources
- Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)
- Institutional Review Board Office (IRB)
- Northwestern University Information Technology (NUIT) and other IT functions
- Office for Research Safety
- Risk Management
- School Representatives
- Student Affairs
- University Housing
- University Police
- University Relations
- University Services/Purchasing Resource Services

Beyond those functions listed above, there may be employees working in other departments and functions within the University whose positions are also identified as essential. Additionally, based on the circumstances surrounding the event, it may become necessary to bring in employees to work during an emergency whose functions and positions were not previously

identified as essential during an emergency, and this is considered a requirement of the job when requested.

Employees in essential functions and positions are required to provide updated contact information on an ongoing basis via the Self Service Portal to ensure they are reachable in case of a campus emergency in which their services are needed. In some cases, employees in essential functions and positions may be required to report for an unscheduled shift, reschedule vacation or personal floating holiday time, and/or work more than the regularly scheduled number of hours during an emergency. Employees in essential functions and positions are responsible for understanding which work assignments are critical and must be completed during an emergency.

Communication:

Until a decision is made by the Crisis Management Team regarding the extent of the emergency, all employees in essential functions and positions are required to work. Once the Crisis Management Team has made an assessment of the emergency, it will report which functions are considered essential and, if any essential functions are exempt from reporting to work, this will be communicated.

The Crisis Management Team will communicate the decisions of University Leadership through various means, including updates to the Northwestern University home page, emergency text messages and phone calls, and University-wide email messages.

Time and Pay Administration:

All employees who work during an emergency will be paid according to the standard policies of the University that are in effect during non-emergency situations. All applicable employment policies remain in effect for those employees who report to work. Employees whose functions and positions are not identified as essential who report to work during an emergency may be temporarily assigned to other tasks and may be released to go home by their supervisor unless they are instructed to remain. Employees who work during an emergency will be paid according to their usual pay rate, including those situations where alternate responsibilities may be performed.

Forms/Instructions

N/A

Appendices

N/A

Related Information

Northwestern University Emergency Preparedness: <http://www.northwestern.edu/up/emergency/>

History/Revision Dates

Origination Date: August 11, 2014

Last Amended Date: Month, Day, Year

Next Review Date: Month, Day, Year