

HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER HANDBOOK OF OPERATING PROCEDURES

Chapter 8	Health and Safety	Effective:	June 2000
Section 8.3	Emergency Closings and Disaster Communication Plan	Revised:	January 2007
Policy 8.3.1	Emergency Closings	Responsibility:	Executive Vice President for Facility Planning and Operations

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

Policy

The Health Science Center may close if an energy curtailment causes a critical shortage of heat or air-conditioning, or if a severe power outage occurs, or if any other emergency situation develops. The Health Science Center will remain open during severe weather unless conditions are such that the majority of students, faculty, and staff are unable to safely traverse city streets or other thoroughfares leading to the campus.

During a period of emergency which may prevent some personnel (but not the majority) from traveling to the Health Science Center, faculty, staff, and students are expected to make every reasonable effort to meet their assigned responsibilities. Those employees who believe they cannot travel safely are expected to notify their immediate supervisors by telephone at the earliest time that such restrictions are known. Hours missed by employees under these circumstances will be handled as any other absence and will be charged to leave or result in reduction of pay.

When extreme weather or other emergency conditions occur and the Health Science Center cannot conduct business as usual, the President or his/her delegate may declare that the Health Science Center is closed and that classes are canceled. If an emergency occurs or weather conditions worsen during a work day, no one other than the President or his/her designee is authorized to excuse employees from work for such situations unless such absences are charged to leave or reductions in pay.

All individuals designated as having “essential responsibilities” are expected to come to the Health Science Center to carry out those responsibilities at the earliest time that travel may be undertaken. Such employees will earn compensatory time in an equivalent amount for hours worked. The President, the Vice Presidents, and the Deans will determine in advance, through their respective department heads, those individuals who are considered to have “essential responsibilities”.

On a routine basis, the Chief of University Police and the on-duty University Police shift supervisor will monitor general weather and San

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Antonio area traffic driving conditions. When official severe weather alerts are received or when local weather conditions deteriorate rapidly and dangerously, the Chief of University Police will promptly advise the President's designee, the Executive Vice President for Facility Planning and Operations, who will contact the President for an executive decision about emergency early closure, complete closure or delayed opening of the University, or some portion of the University. The Chief of University Police will then promptly relay the President's decision to the Director of News and Information in the Office of External Affairs who will contact the main San Antonio-based TV and news radio stations to broadcast the President's decision. In addition, the Director of News and Information in the Office of External Affairs will promptly ensure that the President's decision is posted prominently on the University's web page. Typically, such broadcasting/posting will be no earlier than 9 p.m. on the previous evening, and no later than 6 a.m. of the morning in question. Notification may indicate that "only essential personnel should report". Notification might also indicate complete closure, early or staggered authorized departure, or late or staggered opening of the University for non-essential personnel. If no media announcement is broadcast and if no emergency closing/delay posting is made on the University's web page, then employees should report to or remain at work as if it was a normal day.
