

Facilities Services Department

Essential Personnel

Applies to: All Employees in Facilities Services

Issued: January 27, 2015

Updated: August 31, 2015

POLICY

This policy sets expectations for all Facilities Services employees during the event of a campus emergency including, but not limited to, university closure or catastrophic event in which essential personnel must report to work if it is safe for those employees to do so.

DEFINITIONS

- 1) **Essential Personnel** – Staff who are required to report to their designated work location to ensure operation of essential functions or departments during an emergency, or when the University has suspended operations.

POLICY GUIDELINES

SECTION A: Essential Personnel

- 1) All Facilities Services personnel are considered Essential Personnel. In the event of a campus emergency, Facilities Services personnel should report to work if it is safe for him/her to do so and the employee's individual situation will allow him/her to do so.
 - a. In anticipation of extraordinary circumstances, including but not limited to inclement weather, employees may be given the option to stay on campus rather than go home at the end of their shift. Reasonable sleeping accommodations for employees will be made by their supervisor.
- 2) In the instance of a campus emergency, all Essential Personnel must fulfill their duties to: (1) ensure the continuation of critical university operations; (2) attend to the needs of students and other members of the university community; and (3) protect the university's assets.
- 3) Essential Personnel are expected to come to work in any and all extraordinary/emergency situations unless it is unsafe to do so or they are specifically excused by their supervisor (See Section C: Exclusions).
- 4) Employees are encouraged to refer to the university's Inclement Weather Policy online at <http://safety.utk.edu/emergency-preparedness/campus-emergency-management/inclement-weather-policy/>
- 5) It is the responsibility of all personnel to ask his/her supervisor if there are questions regarding this policy.

SECTION B: Emergency Declaration

- 1) Prior to, or during, an emergency event the associate vice chancellor for Facilities Services, and/or a director(s) in Facilities Services shall declare an emergency and establish a starting point(s) for each emergency. After the emergency, an end point(s) will be set. The start and end points may be different for different units and personnel within Facilities Services.
- 2) If an event, such as a winter storm, can be anticipated from forecasts, etc. a pre-declaration may be issued. The pre-declaration would provide notification of the possible upcoming emergency.

SECTION C: Leave during Emergencies

- 1) All leave requested within the time period of an emergency, from seven calendar days prior to and/or after the declaration of an emergency, shall be subject to review and approval by the respective director or assistant director. The intent is if an employee had leave scheduled and approved prior to becoming aware of the possibility of an emergency, leave will be granted.

Facilities Services Department

Essential Personnel

Applies to: All Employees in Facilities Services

Issued: January 27, 2015

Updated: August 31, 2015

- 2) Annual, or personal, leave requested after the start point for an emergency, and/or during the term of an emergency, will not be granted unless approved by the director or assistant director. Time off will be leave without pay and the employee will not be eligible for administrative closing pay for the time off.
- 3) If an essential employee is not able to come to campus during an emergency, such absence will not be classified as an unexcused absence under the Facilities Services Attendance Policy.
- 4) Sick leave requested after the start point for an emergency, and/or during the term of an emergency, may not be granted. If the employee provides a doctor's note and acceptable release upon return to work the employee will be granted sick leave or applicable administrative closing pay. If an employee does not provide a doctor's note and acceptable release upon return to work, time off will be leave without pay and the employee will not be eligible for administrative closing pay for the time off. The Employee has 10 business days to provide a doctor's note.
- 5) It is understood emergencies may arise for an employee, or there may be a very limited number of cases where there is a family situation outside the control of the employee. This does not include family vacation, but there may be an extremely small number of individuals who have strong compelling reasons why they need to be exempt from this requirement. While such exemptions will be very rare, if an employee feels they must ask for an exemption they should see their supervisor. Any exemption will require approval of either the director for the employee's area or the associate vice chancellor.
- 6) In an emergency, the requirements of the Essential Personnel Policy supersede the requirements of the Facilities Services Attendance Policy.

SECTION D: Exclusions

- 1) Employees may be classified as Non-Essential Personnel by their supervisor and/or unit director during emergency situations under the following conditions:
 - a. Supervisors and/or unit directors must specifically notify an employee if he/she is to be classified Non-Essential.
 - b. If an employee is notified by the appropriate supervisor and/or unit director that he/she is classified as Non-Essential, the employee is not required to report to work for the specific instance.
 - c. Notification may be an emergency notification system using text messaging, and/or voice messaging, and/or email.