



CRITICAL POSITIONS

Harvard
Human
Resources /
Environmental
Health & Safety

Policy & Protocols

Harvard University is a 24/7/365 operation. There may be times due to an emergency or catastrophic event that the University may decide to curtail operations or close. Department/unit managers are responsible for determining the critical functions of their own unit that may not stop during the interruption of normal operations. Critical functions may vary based on the circumstances of the specific incident. In all situations, some positions will be required to maintain critical functions. To the extent possible, department/unit managers are to identify in advance, through the business continuity planning process, the positions that are responsible for performing critical functions and designate them as critical positions.

INDIVIDUALS COVERED BY THIS POLICY AND RELATED PROTOCOLS

This policy applies to all staff positions at the University.

Once a University-wide decision is made on curtailing operations, schools and units may elect to adopt more specific procedures for an operational closure or curtailment.

Where the terms of this policy are in conflict with Union collective bargaining agreements, such agreements shall govern the treatment of covered Union staff members. Where the terms of this policy provide a different benefit than the applicable collective bargaining agreement for Union staff members, such employees shall receive the greater benefit unless otherwise stated in the terms and conditions of the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

REASONS FOR THIS POLICY AND RELATED PROTOCOLS

This policy sets forth the framework for determining staff members' critical position designations.

The follow-on protocols describe the responsibilities of Harvard's managers and administrative staff with respect to critical services and critical positions in the context of emergency closures or operational curtailment.

POLICY DEFINITIONS

- A. **Emergency Closure:** An unscheduled suspension or curtailment of the University's operations due to inclement weather, a natural or man-made disaster, the outbreak of pandemic illnesses and/or any other unforeseen circumstances. A decision to close or delay the opening of administrative offices and functions due to an emergency shall be made by the University's Executive Vice President and the University's Crisis Management Team (CMT), which includes representatives from General Counsel, Harvard University Police Department, Campus Services, Harvard Public Affairs & Communications, and Harvard College, in coordination with the School Administrative Deans.
- B. **Critical Functions:** A function that is necessary to maintain or protect the health, safety, or physical well-being of the University's personnel (students, staff, and faculty), critical administrative functions, academic mission, facilities and/or assets (including research projects). Managers should refer to their unit's business continuity plans for listings of critical functions along with their associated levels of criticality.
- C. **Critical Position:** A position that has been designated as critical because its responsibilities include non-deferrable services that must be performed despite an emergency closure or curtailment. Positions may be designated

as critical on a seasonal or situational basis (e.g., in the event of a snow emergency only or in the event of a public health crisis). In addition, any position may be designated as critical at any point during an emergency, even if not designated as critical prior to the emergency.

- On-Campus Critical Position: The employee is required to report to campus to his/her normal work location (or an alternate site if necessary) for non-deferrable work during an emergency closure or curtailment. An employee serving in an on-campus critical position may have to report to work even if the emergency closure occurs during a time that he/she is not regularly scheduled to work.
 - Remote Access Critical Position: The employee is required to perform non-deferrable work during emergency closures or curtailments but is not necessarily required to do so at his/her normal workspace. Instead, a remote access employee may perform his/her non-deferrable work remotely from home or another off-campus location.
- D. Standby Position: A position that is not designated as critical and as such its incumbent is not required to work during an emergency closure or curtailment. (Note: as outlined above, any position may be designated as critical at any point during an emergency, even if not designated as critical prior to the emergency.)

Compensation

- Employees who occupy non-exempt, critical positions and who perform work during an emergency closure or curtailment may receive compensatory time off for actual hours worked in addition to regular pay (and/or overtime pay for hours over 40, as required by the FLSA), unless otherwise dictated by collective bargaining agreement, job description or local policy. Employees occupying exempt critical positions and who work during an emergency closure or curtailment will receive their regular pay; local units shall not be restricted from providing additional compensation on a case-by-case basis and as dictated by specific extraordinary events or operational need(s).
- Employees who occupy standby positions will receive their normal base pay for the time they were regularly scheduled to work during an emergency administrative closure or curtailment. Non-exempt employees who were not scheduled to work will not be paid.
- If temporary employees on the Harvard University payroll are required to work during an emergency closure or curtailment, they will be paid for actual time worked.
- Employees in critical positions whose work requires them to stay on campus overnight during an emergency closure or curtailment or whose non-deferrable work results in overnight service on-campus will be provided with or reimbursed for sleeping accommodations. A non-exempt employee who is required to be on duty for less than 24 hours will be paid for all hours on duty. If a non-exempt employee is required to be on duty for 24 hours or longer, up to 8 hours of sleeping time may be unpaid if adequate sleeping facilities can be provided for rest.

PROTOCOLS FOR CRITICAL POSITIONS

The following protocols describe the responsibilities of unit managers to designate and assign staff to critical positions as well as the corresponding responsibilities of staff assigned to those positions during emergency closures or curtailments. If a school or department has different protocols for critical positions than those listed below, their Human Resources office is responsible for disseminating the school/department-specific protocols to its staff.

Manager Responsibilities

- At the start of the recruitment process for a new or vacant position, the hiring manager should indicate on the new hire requisition form if the position has a critical on-campus or critical remote access designation. Positions will be designated as critical based solely on functional needs as related to job duties. Critical position designations must be documented in job descriptions.
- Managers and their employees should define, document, and keep up-to-date emergency management and business continuity plans which detail the non-deferrable work that must be completed during an emergency closure/curtailment. Managers will ensure that their emergency and continuity plans are up-to-date, validated through exercises, and communicated to staff on a regular basis.
- Managers and/or HR departments must provide timekeeping instructions to non-exempt employees.
- If a manager designates a critical position as remote access, he/she must coordinate with the local IT group to ensure the employee has the appropriate computer access and security to work remotely when required.
- On an annual basis, managers and/or HR departments should remind employees who serve in critical positions of their position designation.
- Managers should plan for and provide flexible work arrangements during emergency closures/curtailments to the extent possible. Refer to the [Office of Work/Life](#) (or the HUCTW [collective bargaining agreement](#), if applicable) for further guidance.
- Managers must ensure that their units are appropriately staffed to maintain/resume their critical functions during emergency closures/curtailments.
- Managers must implement emergency directives from University administrators and public/medical officials.
- Managers should refer employees to the [Office of Work/Life](#) or other support resources as appropriate.

Critical Position Responsibilities

Critical employees are expected to report to campus or work remotely (if approved) during an emergency unless specifically directed by their department not to report or if directed by public/medical authorities not to report for health and safety reasons. A critical employee may be required to report for an unscheduled shift, reschedule vacation leave and/or work more than his/her regularly scheduled hours during an emergency. In addition, a critical employee must:

- Provide his/her department with updated emergency contact information on an on-going basis and enroll in MessageMe.
- Discuss alternative work arrangements, such as working from home or another location in case of an emergency, with his/her supervisor.
- Understand work assignments that must be completed during an emergency closure.

- Work during emergency closures/curtailments whether on campus, at home, or at another location.
- The safety of our employees is the number one concern in an emergency. No member of the staff or faculty is expected to endanger herself or himself traveling to or from work. If the University is operating normally and an employee determines that travel to campus is too hazardous, he or she may, in consultation with his or her supervisor, elect to stay home and use a vacation day or other arrangement approved by the supervisor consistent with Human Resources policy.

Standby Position Responsibilities

- Employees in standby positions should not report to campus during an emergency.

Related Issues

- Employees who occupy an On-Campus Critical Position must make arrangements in advance to fulfill this responsibility, whether this means attending to transportation needs, attending to the needs of family members, or other issues. An employee with an On-Campus Critical Position who does not report to work during an emergency may be subject to disciplinary action.

COMMUNICATION

Any changes to the University's usual schedule of operation will be communicated in the following ways. Additionally, critical personnel should receive communication from their local units. No messages will be sent if there is no change to regular working hours.

- The Harvard Homepage
 - An alert will be posted to the Harvard homepage (www.harvard.edu) which will direct users to an emergency page outlining the University's response.
 - The University's 24-hour news line, (617) 496-NEWS, will be updated with any University response to the emergency.
- Email messages from the Executive Vice President and School Administrative Deans
 - The Executive Vice President and/or local School Administrative Deans will communicate any decisions related to the suspension of normal operations – including delayed starts, early releases or suspension of normal operations.
- MessageMe Alert
 - A MessageMe alert will be sent to all subscribers when decisions have been made regarding delayed starts, early releases or the suspension of normal operations. Critical employees should always follow their specific local policies and the guidance provided by their local leadership. Please enroll in MessageMe at <https://messageme.harvard.edu/>.

RELATED POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Office of the Executive Vice-President (EVP)

[Central Administration – Inclement Weather Guidelines](#)

Harvard Campus Services (PIN required)

For Employees: [Emergency Response & Staffing Policy](#)

HHR Harvard Office of Labor & Employee Relations (OLER)

[Collective Bargaining Agreements](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Have questions? Contact the following offices with questions about these guidelines and best practices.

- a) Local Unit Human Resources Offices: Local Human Resources offices provide advice and assistance on the operation of and compliance with the policy and on specific concerns, as necessary.
<http://hr.harvard.edu/local-human-resources-offices>
- b) Office of Labor & Employee Relations: OLER can assist local human resources offices with interpreting the Policy and related union and employee relations issues.
University Place, Suite 480 South (124 Mt. Auburn St., Cambridge)
(617) 495-2786
<http://laborrelations.harvard.edu>
- c) Emergency Management: A unit of Campus Services – Environmental Health & Safety, the Emergency Management Group can assist managers, local human resources officers and other stakeholders with emergency planning & response and interpretation of the Protocols for implementing this Policy.
<http://ehs.harvard.edu/emergency-management>
- d) Contact Information for Campus Unions
<http://laborrelations.harvard.edu/employees/unions.shtml>
- e) Harvard Human Resources (HHR), Office of Work/Life: OW/L can assist managers with planning for and implementing exempt-staff flexible work schedules.
(617) 495-4100
worklife@harvard.edu
http://harvie.harvard.edu/Work_Life_Balance