



DOWNSTATE
HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

TO: Vice Presidents, Deans and Department Chairs

FROM: Jamie Grecco
Senior Vice President & Chief of Staff

SUBJECT: **STATE POLICY ON EMERGENCY CLOSURES AND ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

DATE: August 24, 2026

Below is a summary of New York State's emergency closure policy applicable to weather-related events, public health crises, and other emergencies:

Only the Governor has the authority to close state agencies, which includes SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University. Local governmental officials, police, radio, and television stations do not have the authority to close state offices and facilities. Likewise, declarations of a state of emergency or road closures do not equate to the closure of state facilities.

On the rare occasion that the Governor issues an order of closure, you will be notified. If an announcement is made that only essential service employees are expected to report to work, those employees should make every effort to report. University Presidents are authorized to cancel classes even if the Governor has not closed facilities. They may also excuse non-essential employees from work, where appropriate accruals may be charged.

Campus administration has the discretion to determine who is considered essential and must report to work based on the specifics of an emergency or extraordinary circumstance. In general, essential employees shall be those whose duties include continuing care and/or safety of patients, students, property, or animals; maintaining mission-critical systems; or emergency response, relief, and recovery. **Please note that all University Hospital-based employees are designated as essential.**

This notification will be sent to all employees, including those within the academic enterprise, at the start of the academic year. Supervisors may use the attached Essential Employee Notification form for this purpose. Once signed by the employee, the department should forward a copy to the Office of Employee & Labor Relations.

The Governor and the Civil Service Commission may retroactively excuse absences related to extreme weather or other emergencies by suspending time and attendance rules. This determination will be communicated to SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University following any emergency. Only when the Governor or Civil Service makes this determination may employees' absences be considered "excused." You will be informed of the credits charged to cover related absences at that time.

Please post this memorandum in your offices.

cc: President Riley
Dr. Balavenkatesh Kanna

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downstate.edu

ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEE NOTIFICATION

EMPLOYEE NAME/TITLE:

DEPARTMENT:

SUPERVISOR:

EXTENSION:

This notice is to advise you that your position has been designated as follows:

[] ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEE: In an effort to maintain the operations of SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University during emergencies, including weather-related emergencies, you are required to report to / remain at work regardless of conditions. Examples of emergencies include, but not limited to: snowstorms, power outages, hurricanes, or national emergencies. It is your responsibility to make the necessary transportation and personal arrangements to ensure that you report to/remain at the worksite as scheduled. Any announcement that classes have been cancelled or the facility is "closed" does **NOT** relieve essential employees from their obligation to report to work.

[] NON-ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEE: Your position has not been deemed as essential to the continued operation of SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University during an emergency. Examples of emergencies include, but not limited to snowstorms, power outages, hurricanes, or national emergencies. This designation can be changed at any time based on operational needs by anyone within the supervisory change of command.

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE

DATE

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE

DATE

ALL EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING NON-ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEES, ARE EXPECTED TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO REPORT TO WORK AS SCHEDULED IN AN EMERGENCY, WEATHER-RELATED OR OTHERWISE.

cc: Personnel File
Employee & Labor Relations