



CORNELL UNIVERSITY  
POLICY LIBRARY

# Inclement Weather

## POLICY 8.2

Volume: 8, Risk Management and Public Safety  
Chapter: 2, Inclement Weather  
Responsible Executive: Associate Vice President  
Responsible Office: Public Safety  
Originally Issued: December 1997  
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### POLICY STATEMENT

Cornell University may change its operating status during and surrounding periods of inclement weather. At such times, the university has a prescribed method for evaluation and communication of these changes to university staff, faculty, and students. Academic and administrative units are expected to abide by any decision made by central administration regarding operating status.

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### REASON FOR POLICY

The university wishes to protect the safety of its community members, research, and facilities in periods of inclement weather. Toward that end, the university is committed to operational consistency and efficiency when a change in operating status is warranted.

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### ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

- Cornell University
- Cornell Tech campus
- Weill Cornell Medicine campuses

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### WHO SHOULD READ THIS POLICY

- All members of the Cornell University community

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### WEB ADDRESS FOR THIS POLICY

- This policy: [www.dfa.cornell.edu/policy/policies/inclement-weather](http://www.dfa.cornell.edu/policy/policies/inclement-weather)
- University Policy Office: [www.policy.cornell.edu](http://www.policy.cornell.edu)

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## RELATED RESOURCES

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### University Policies

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[University Policy 6.9, Time Away from Work \(Excluding Academic and Bargaining Unit Staff\)](#)  
[University Policy 6.13, Disability Accommodation Process for Faculty and Staff](#)  
[University Policy 8.3, Emergency Planning](#)

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### University Documentation, Forms, Systems, and Other Resources

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[Accessibility Information: Campus Access During Inclement Weather](#)  
[Cornell Operating Status](#)  
[Cornell Special Conditions Information](#)  
[Inclement Weather Frequently Asked Questions](#)  
[Inclement Weather Program and Pay Guidelines](#)  
[Inclement Weather Shutdowns – University Faculty](#)  
[Student Center](#)  
[Student Disability Services: Planning for Emergencies & Inclement Weather](#)  
[Voluntary Inclement Weather Questionnaire for Faculty and Staff](#)  
[Voluntary Inclement Weather Questionnaire for Students](#)  
[Workday](#)

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### CONTACTS

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Please direct general questions about University Policy 8.2, Inclement Weather, to your unit's administration. If you have questions about specific issues, call the following offices:

Subject	Contact	Telephone	Email/Web Address
<b>Policy Clarification</b>	Division of Public Safety	607-255-8945	<a href="mailto:oem@cornell.edu">oem@cornell.edu</a>
<b>Area Bus Service (Schedules)</b>	Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT)	(607) 277-7433 (277-RIDE)	<a href="http://www.tcatbus.com">www.tcatbus.com</a>
<b>Area Bus Service (Other Questions)</b>	Chemung/Schuyler County Transit	(607) 734-5211	<a href="https://ridectran.com/en/">https://ridectran.com/en/</a>
	Cortland Public Transit	(607) 756-3416	<a href="https://www.way2gocortland.org/">https://www.way2gocortland.org/</a>
	Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT)	(607) 277-7433	<a href="http://www.tcatbus.com">www.tcatbus.com</a>
<b>Pay Guidelines</b>	College or Unit HR Department	Unit-specific	<a href="https://hr.cornell.edu/browse-self-service/find-your-hr-rep">https://hr.cornell.edu/browse-self-service/find-your-hr-rep</a>
<b>Identification of Essential Services</b>	Appropriate Department or Unit Head	Unit-specific	
<b>Disability Accommodation for Faculty and Staff Members</b>	Medical Leaves Administration	(607) 255-1177	<a href="mailto:benefits@cornell.edu">benefits@cornell.edu</a> <a href="https://hr.cornell.edu/understand-your-benefits/accommodations/disability-accommodations">https://hr.cornell.edu/understand-your-benefits/accommodations/disability-accommodations</a>
<b>Disability Accommodation for Students</b>	Student Disability Services	(607) 254-4545	<a href="mailto:sds_cu@cornell.edu">sds_cu@cornell.edu</a> <a href="https://sds.cornell.edu/accommodations-services/planning-emergencies-inclement-weather">sds.cornell.edu/accommodations-services/planning-emergencies-inclement-weather</a>
<b>Emergency</b>	Cornell Public Safety Communications Center	911 (607) 255-1111	
<b>Inclement Weather Program for Individuals with Disabilities</b>	ADA Coordinator Asset Management and Logistics/Facilities and Campus Services	607-255-5150	<a href="https://accessibility.cornell.edu/campus/inclement-weather/">accessibility.cornell.edu/campus/inclement-weather/</a>
<b>Operating Status of the University</b>	Inclement Weather Phone	(607) 255-3377	<a href="https://emergency.cornell.edu/">emergency.cornell.edu/</a>
<b>Parking Vehicles on Campus</b>	Transportation and Delivery Services	(607) 255-4600	<a href="https://fcs.cornell.edu/content/winter-and-break-parking-rules">fcs.cornell.edu/content/winter-and-break-parking-rules</a>

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### DEFINITIONS

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These definitions apply to terms as they are used in this policy.

<b>Business Continuity</b>	The framework by which Cornell University will mitigate the impacts and restore operations during and after an emergency condition or other disruptive incident, to maximize the continuation and performance of department or unit services and functions.
<b>Delayed Opening</b>	A campus operating status based upon the weather or other emergency that delays or changes the schedules of on-campus administrative and academic functions.
<b>Designated Weather Watcher (DWW)</b>	An individual appointed by the Executive Vice President to assist in the monitoring and assessment of weather conditions, notification of key personnel, and consultation with appropriate parties during periods of potential or actual inclement weather.
<b>Employee Who Supports Essential Services</b>	An individual needed on campus to support student, physical plant and safety operations, and research needs even when the normal status of the university is modified or suspended.
<b>Full Closing</b>	A campus operating status based upon the weather or other emergency that closes on-campus administrative and academic functions, except selected emergency and essential services.
<b>Inclement Weather</b>	Expected or actual weather conditions that are severe enough to affect university vehicular traffic, university schedules, and/or other university operations.
<b>Early Closing</b>	A campus operating status based upon the weather or other emergency, which closes on-campus administrative and academic functions before their normally scheduled time.
<b>Road Advisory</b>	A travel advisory issued by the Tompkins County Sheriff. When a road advisory is issued, the campus will remain open, and units are expected to remain open.
<b>Travel Ban</b>	The official closure of all roads in Tompkins County, issued by the Tompkins County Sheriff. In the event of a Tompkins County Travel Ban, the campus will close.
<b>Work Arrangement</b>	The approved living and working agreement made between an employee and Cornell. Types of work arrangements are defined in Policy 6.6.3 Flexibility in the Workplace, i.e., Fully Remote, Hybrid, Fully Onsite.

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### RESPONSIBILITIES

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The major responsibilities each party has in connection with the University Policy 8.2, Inclement Weather, are as follows:

<b>Associate Vice President for Public Safety</b>	Consult with EH&S, CUPD, and Designated Weather Watcher (DWW) during weather watch, and when a decision regarding operating status is being made.
<b>Senior Director for Environmental Health and Safety</b>	Consult with Cornell University Police Department (CUPD) and Designated Weather Watcher (DWW) during weather watch, and when a decision regarding operating status is being made.
<b>Associate Vice President for Facilities Management</b>	Consult with the Vice President for Facilities and Campus Services when a decision regarding operating status is being made.
<b>Cornell University Police Department (CUPD)</b>	Consult with appropriate members of the university and surrounding law enforcement agencies. Report conclusions to the Associate Vice President for Public Safety.  Initiate local warning actions when there is an immediate weather threat.
<b>Department Chair or Unit Head</b>	Within the unit, maintain the same operating status that has been declared by the university.  When a change in operating status has been declared, maintain a schedule within the unit that is consistent with this policy and an employee's work arrangement.  Annually, identify essential services and employees in the unit (see "Employees Who Support Essential Services").  Develop adequate internal procedures for compliance with this policy.
<b>Designated Weather Watcher (DWW)</b>	Remain aware of weather conditions on behalf of the university.  Heighten weather-monitoring activities to remain cognizant of the threat to the university and surrounding area if and when weather becomes potentially hazardous.  Notify a pre-established inclement weather planning group if and when it becomes apparent that hazardous weather is imminent.  Work with the Public Safety Communications Center, CUPD and Strategic Communications to issue weather advisories/warnings and changes in operating status of the university.
<b>Director of Grounds</b>	Consult with the CUPD and the Vice President for Facilities and Campus Services when a decision regarding operating status is being made.
<b>Senior Director for Strategic Communications</b>	Assist with development of campus messaging. Follow notification procedures consistent with this policy (see the "Notification Procedures" segment of this policy).
<b>Senior Director of Transportation and Delivery Services</b>	Follow notification procedures consistent with this policy (see the "Notification Procedures" segment of this policy). This includes the Tompkins County and out-of-county transportation service providers.
<b>Supervisor</b>	Be reasonably understanding and flexible regarding staff members' needs during periods of inclement weather.  Discuss and manage work expectations during inclement weather in alignment with an employee's work arrangement and job responsibilities.

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	Implement contingency plans, as applicable, to maintain essential services.
<b>Vice President for Facilities and Campus Services</b>	Follow notification procedures consistent with this policy (see "Notification Procedures").
<b>Vice President for Human Resources</b>	Address issues regarding time off and compensation practices.
<b>Vice President for Student and Campus Life</b>	Follow notification procedures consistent with this policy (see "Notification Procedures").

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## PRINCIPLES

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### Overview

During inclement weather, the AVP of Public Safety will gather information from a variety of internal and external sources. The AVP will consult with senior leadership and select academic partners before recommending a change in operating status for the Ithaca campus to the president or designee. The president or designee will authorize the final decision on operating status.

There is a university-wide expectation for employees who can work remotely during a change in operating status to do so. A change in operating status may impact work expectations differently based on an employee's work arrangement and job responsibilities.

In-person instruction is central to our academic mission; therefore, when campus closes, classes will be canceled, and students will not be expected to attend virtually or complete additional coursework for that day.

◆ **Caution:** A decision of central administration as to when the Ithaca campus will close will govern all units of the university located in Tompkins County. Individual colleges and departments may not override a decision of central administration to close the Ithaca campus (i.e., departments and units may not stay open if central administration has declared that the Ithaca campus is closed; similarly, units may not declare themselves closed unless the Ithaca campus is closed).

This policy describes university procedures for implementing a change in operating status (see "Procedures"); and outlines standard notification procedures for administrators to follow in such instances (see "Notification Procedures").

◆ **Notes:**

- Procedures for the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva may differ from those of Tompkins County locations. See "New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva" for more information.
- Procedures for colleges or units outside of Tompkins County may differ from those of Tompkins County locations. See "Other Locations" for more information.

### Faculty, Staff Member, and Student Needs

Supervisors should be reasonably understanding and flexible regarding a staff member's individual needs during inclement weather, especially if the employee has a long commute to and from work. A faculty or staff member who believes it is unsafe to travel, or has unexpected family care responsibilities such as local school closings, should use his or her judgment regarding travel (for information on how to

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record time taken off during inclement weather, see the [Inclement Weather Program and Pay Guidelines](#).

Cornell has a voluntary program for faculty and staff with short- or long-term mobility impairments who have difficulty getting to or around their worksite during inclement weather. Visit the Disability Information website (see “Related Resources”).

For students with disabilities, inclement weather procedures and accommodation information is available on the Student Disability Services website (see “Related Resources”).



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### PROCEDURES

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#### **Employees Who Support Essential Services Required to Report to Campus During Closure**

When normal university operations are disrupted because of weather impacts, certain employees are still needed on campus to support areas such as campus security and safety operations, dining, housing, health services, and utilities and information technology infrastructure and services, as well as to attend to research animals, veterinary clinical patients, experimental plants, and other sensitive and critical research operations.

Units should identify their essential services and employees (or employee categories) who may be asked to report to work during a partial or full campus closure, within their respective business continuity plans, and develop contingency plans to deliver essential services with a reduced number of employees. Supervisors should ensure those employees understand their requirement to report to work and provide each employee an opportunity to discuss any issues or concerns.

#### **Work Requirements when Operating Status is Unchanged (Campus is Open)**

If a county or municipality announces that you should "avoid unnecessary travel" (travel to and from work is considered necessary travel) and there isn't any accompanying change to the university operating status, employees should make reasonable efforts to report to work as usual, but are advised to avoid undue risks in traveling. Employees may work remotely with permission of their supervisor if job responsibilities allow.

If a municipality or county announces that motorists are prohibited from driving on all or specific roads or declares a travel ban, employees are not expected to violate those rules to come to work.

Employees who are scheduled to work on-site but who do not work due to personal weather-related travel conditions when the university is open may charge the time to health and personal leave or vacation.

If an employee's home location is experiencing inclement weather, and they are unable to complete their job responsibilities while working remotely, employees should charge the time to health and personal leave or vacation.

NOTE: All vehicle travel to and from work, regardless of conditions (e.g., unnecessary travel, closed roads), is addressed by the employee's personal auto insurance (there is no exclusion under personal auto policies for damage to a vehicle when driving on "closed" roads). Employees are encouraged to contact their insurance providers if they have questions.

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#### **Work Requirements During Operating Status Changes**

Employees are expected to work remotely if job responsibilities allow. Employees who can work remotely but who do not work due to personal circumstances may charge the time to health and personal leave or vacation.

Supervisors and employees are encouraged to review inclement weather work expectations annually, and in advance of inclement weather in New York state.

Employees who are unable to fulfill work expectations during a change in operating status may charge the time to health and personal leave or vacation.

#### **How to Learn About a Change in Operating Status**

Once a decision has been made to change the operating status of the university, the details will be disseminated as widely as possible through emergency mass notification, email, and the local media. Whenever possible, the expected reopening time and/or date will be available with the closing information through these channels.

#### **Option A—*Online***

Employees may access information on the operating status of the university at the following webpages and social media outlets:

- [emergency.cornell.edu](https://emergency.cornell.edu)
- [cuinfo.cornell.edu/alerts](https://cuinfo.cornell.edu/alerts)
- Twitter: @cornell
- Facebook: @cornell

#### **Option B—*Emergency Mass Notification via email, Text, or Voice Message***

In the event of an emergent incident that could affect the safety of the campus community, or significantly affects campus operations, or changes Ithaca campus operating status, a CornellALERT message will be sent to Cornell email accounts of all faculty, staff members, and students with an active Cornell NetID. Additionally, faculty, staff, and students can receive emergency notifications via text message on their mobile phones or voice message on any phone.

To sign up for text or voice emergency alerts go to [emergency.cornell.edu/alert/](https://emergency.cornell.edu/alert/), select the appropriate category (students, employees, affiliates), and log in with your NetID and password.

#### **Option C—*Radio or television***

Whenever possible, announcements of a decision regarding the university's operating status will be broadcast over local and regional radio and television stations, beginning at 5:00 a.m.

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◆ **Note:** The media generally do not carry announcements of openings; they broadcast closings and delays only. If there is no announcement concerning Cornell, assume that the university will be open and operating as usual.

#### **Option D—Telephone**

Call the Inclement Weather Phone at 607-255-3377 to find out the present or predicted operating status of the university. This is particularly useful to those regularly scheduled to start work before 5:00 a.m.

#### **Decision to Make a Change in Operating Status for Ithaca Campus**

If a change in operating status is warranted, the President will authorize one of three options: early closing, delayed opening, or full closing.

Units that provide essential services should review their business continuity plans and implement processes and procedures commensurate with the disruption. Other units that do not support essential services are expected to observe central administration decisions regarding a change in operations.

#### **Pay Guidelines**

In the event of an early closing, delayed opening, or full closing, employees and supervisors at all Cornell work locations except the Weill Cornell Medicine campus should consult the [Inclement Weather Program and Pay Guidelines](#).

#### **New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva**

The New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva has only one emergency mode of operation during inclement weather: cancellation of all functions except those essential to safety and basic physical plant operation.

The director or designee has the responsibility to make the decision to declare the emergency mode, which is independent of any Ithaca campus operating status decisions affecting the Cornell campus at Ithaca.

Whenever possible, announcement of decisions on inclement weather conditions will be made by 6:30 a.m. of the day affected, through the director's office.

If a weather emergency is called during the day, notification will be made through departmental offices.

#### **Other Locations**

The division vice president, dean, or designee is responsible to make the decision about operating status for locations other than Ithaca and Geneva campuses. The decision is made independent of any emergency mode decisions affecting the Ithaca campus. If the city or county where the department or unit is located announces that motorists are prohibited from driving on all or specific roads or declares a travel ban, employees are not expected to violate those rules to come to work.

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#### **Fully remote employees**

Employees with fully remote work arrangements will abide by the operating status for their designated campus.

If an employee's remote work location is experiencing inclement weather that is not impacting their designated campus, employees should refer to the Time Away from Work policy for further guidelines and leave options.

#### **Notification Procedures**

The following table shows the notification duties if there is any change in Ithaca campus operating status surrounding a period of inclement weather. Notification of a decision to close or delay will be communicated to the campus community as quickly as possible. If the decision is made during working hours, email and telephone trees will be used. Under all circumstances, notification will be sent to local radio and television stations, and an email notification will be sent automatically to all faculty, staff members, and students.

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**Table 3**  
*Notification duties for decisions regarding operating status of the university*

<b>Party</b>	<b>Must Notify</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Associate Vice President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• President, Provost</li> <li>• Executive Vice President</li> <li>• Vice President for University Relations</li> <li>• Vice President for Student and Campus Life</li> <li>• Vice President for Human Resources</li> <li>• Vice President for Facilities and Campus Services</li> <li>• Senior Director of Environmental Health and Safety</li> <li>• Chief of the Police, CUPD</li> <li>• Senior Vice Provost</li> <li>• Dean of Faculty</li> </ul>	
Other Unit Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff members, as appropriate</li> </ul>	
Senior Director for Strategic Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All deans</li> <li>• All vice presidents (except those noted above)</li> <li>• Local media</li> <li>• Director of Visitor Relations</li> <li>• Associate Vice President for University Relations</li> </ul>	As necessary
Senior Director of Transportation and Mail Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tompkins County and out-of-county transportation service providers</li> <li>• Other staff members, as appropriate</li> </ul>	
Vice President for Facilities and Campus Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Director for Strategic Communications</li> <li>• Associate Vice President for Facilities Management</li> <li>• Director of Grounds</li> <li>• Senior Director of Transportation and Mail Services</li> </ul>	
Vice President for Student and Campus Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of Athletics</li> <li>• Director of Cornell Health</li> <li>• Assistant Vice President for Student and Campus Life</li> <li>• Director of Cornell Dining</li> <li>• Other staff members, as appropriate</li> </ul>	As necessary