



Inclement Weather

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.

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.

ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

- Ithaca-based locations (Tompkins County and Geneva locations)
- Cornell Tech campus
- Weill Cornell Medicine campuses

WHO SHOULD READ THIS POLICY

- All members of the Cornell University Ithaca and Geneva campus communities

WEB ADDRESS FOR THIS POLICY

- This policy: www.dfa.cornell.edu/policy/policies/inclement-weather
- University Policy Office: www.policy.cornell.edu

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RELATED RESOURCES

University Policies

[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](#)

University Documentation, Forms, Systems, and Other Resources

[Accessibility Information: Campus Access During Inclement Weather](#)
[Cornell Operating Status](#)
[Cornell Special Conditions Information](#)
[Guidelines for Pay Practices During Inclement Weather \(PDF\)](#)
[Inclement Weather Frequently Asked Questions](#)
[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

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
Policy Clarification	Environmental Health and Safety	607-255-8200	askehs@cornell.edu
Area Bus Service (Recorded Information)	Chemung/Schuylar County Transit	(607) 254-6791	fcs.cornell.edu/content/bus-services-and-passes
	Cortland Public Transit	(607) 254-6792	
	Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT)	(607) 254-6790	www.tcatbus.com
Area Bus Service (Schedules)	Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT)	(607) 277-7433 (277-RIDE)	www.tcatbus.com
Area Bus Service (Other Questions)	Chemung/Schuylar County Transit	(607) 734-5211	fcs.cornell.edu/content/bus-services-and-passes
	Cortland Public Transit	(607) 758-3383	
	Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT)	(607) 277-7433	www.tcatbus.com
Compensation	Compensation Services	(607) 254-8355	hr.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/documents/inclementweatherpayguidelines.pdf
Identification of Essential Services	Appropriate Department or Unit Head	Unit-specific	
Disability Accommodation for Faculty and Staff Members	Medical Leaves Administration	(607) 255-1177	benefits@cornell.edu hr.cornell.edu/benefits-pay/leaves-disability/accommodations
Disability Accommodation for Students	Student Disability Services	(607) 254-4545	sds_cu@cornell.edu sds.cornell.edu/accommodations-services/planning-emergencies-inclement-weather
Emergency	Cornell University Police Department (CUPD)	911 (607) 255-1111	
Inclement Weather Program for Individuals with Disabilities	Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity	(607) 255-3976	accessibility.cornell.edu/campus/inclement-weather/
Operating Status of the University	Inclement Weather Phone	(607) 255-3377	emergency.cornell.edu/
Parking Vehicles on Campus	Transportation and Delivery Services	(607) 255-4600	fcs.cornell.edu/content/winter-and-break-parking-rules

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DEFINITIONS

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

Business Continuity	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.
Delayed Opening	A university operating status based upon the weather or other emergency that delays or changes the schedules of administrative and academic units.
Designated Weather Watcher (DWW)	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..
Employee Who Supports Essential Services	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.
Full Closing	A university operating status based upon the weather or other emergency that closes all administrative and academic units, except selected emergency and essential services.
Inclement Weather	Expected or actual weather conditions that are severe enough to affect university vehicular traffic and/or university schedules.
Early Closing	A university operating status based upon the weather or other emergency, which closes administrative and academic units before their normally scheduled time.
Road Advisory	A travel advisory issued by the Tompkins County Sheriff. When a road advisory is issued, the university will remain open, and units are expected to remain open.
Road Closure	The official closure of all roads in Tompkins County, issued by the Tompkins County Sheriff. In the event of a Tompkins County road closure, the university will close.

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RESPONSIBILITIES

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

Associate Vice President for Environmental Health and Safety	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.
Associate Vice President for Facilities Management	Consult with the Vice President for Facilities and Campus Services when a decision regarding operating status is being made.
Cornell University Police Department (CUPD)	Consult with appropriate members of the university and surrounding law enforcement agencies. Report conclusions to the Executive Vice President. Initiate local warning actions when there is an immediate weather threat.
Department Chair or Unit Head	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. Annually, identify essential services and employees in the unit (see "Employees Who Support Essential Services"). Develop adequate internal procedures for compliance with this policy.
Designated Weather Watcher (DWW)	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 CUPD and Strategic Communications to issue weather advisories/warnings and changes in operating status of the university.
Director of Grounds	Consult with the CUPD and the Vice President for Facilities and Campus Services when a decision regarding operating status is being made.
Senior Director for Strategic Communications	Assist with development of campus messaging. Follow notification procedures consistent with this policy (see the "Notification Procedures" segment of this policy).
Senior Director of Transportation and Mail Services	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.
Supervisor	Be reasonably understanding and flexible regarding staff members' needs during periods of inclement weather. Implement contingency plans, as applicable, to maintain essential services.
Vice President for Facilities and Campus Services	Follow notification procedures consistent with this policy (see "Notification Procedures").

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RESPONSIBILITIES, CONTINUED

Vice President for Human Resources	Address issues regarding time off and compensation practices.
Vice President for Student and Campus Life	Follow notification procedures consistent with this policy (see "Notification Procedures").

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PRINCIPLES

Overview

During inclement weather, the Executive Vice President (EVP) will gather information from a variety of internal and external sources. The EVP will consult with senior leadership and select academic partners before recommending a change in operating status to the president or designee. The president or designee will authorize the final decision on operating status.

◆ **Caution:** A decision of central administration as to when the university 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 university (i.e., departments and units may not stay open if central administration has declared that the university is closed; similarly, units may not declare themselves closed unless the university 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 Outside of Tompkins County" 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 record time taken off during inclement weather, see the [Guidelines for Pay Practices During Inclement Weather \[PDF\]](#)).

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") or contact the Office of Workforce Policy and Labor Relations (WPLR) at (607) 254-7232 or equalopportunity@cornell.edu.

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PRINCIPLES, CONTINUED

WPLR will collect the information and work with the ADA Coordinator for Facilities to assess the staff member's parking or transit information, work location, arrival and departure times, other buildings frequented in the workday, and challenges experienced due to inclement weather. In addition to this campus-wide coordination, staff members are encouraged to work with their supervisors and building coordinators to relay their specific needs.

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

Employees Who Provide Essential Services

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 provide those services, within their respective business continuity plans. Provide each employee an opportunity to discuss any issues or concerns, and develop contingency plans to deliver essential services with a reduced number of employees.

Travel to and from Work

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.

If a municipality or county announces that motorists are prohibited from driving on all or some of the roads, employees are not expected to violate those rules in order to come to work.

Employees who are scheduled to work 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.

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.

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. The expected reopening time and/or date will be available with the closing information through these channels, whenever possible.

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PROCEDURES, CONTINUED

Option A—Online

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

- cuinfo.cornell.edu/alerts
- emergency.cornell.edu
- 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 affect campus operations 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/, 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.

◆ **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

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

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PROCEDURES, CONTINUED

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.

Compensation

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 [Guidelines for Pay Practices During Inclement Weather \(PDF\)](#).

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 emergency mode 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.

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

Other Locations Outside of Tompkins County

The division vice president, dean, or designee is responsible to make the decision about operating status. The decision is made independent of any emergency mode decisions affecting the Cornell campus at Ithaca. If the city or county where the department or unit is located announces that motorists are prohibited from driving on all or some of the roads, employees are not expected to violate those rules in order to come to work.

Notification Procedures

The following table shows the notification duties if there is any change in university 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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PROCEDURES, CONTINUED

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

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

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