

UW POLICY DIRECTORY

Rescinded 05/30/2025

EO 27 Suspended Operation Policy

1. Suspension of Operations

In the event of an emergency situation that adversely affects University operations, public health, or the well-being and safety of students, employees, or the public, the President or the President's designee(s) may declare a temporary suspension of any or all operations of the institution. During a suspension of operations, the President, or the President's designee(s), may take any lawful action to secure the safety of University employees, students, and the public, and to preserve the University's ability to function, or return to function, during and following the emergency event.

Situations which might require a suspension of operations include, but are not limited to: severe weather, natural disaster, widespread transmission of a communicable disease, fire or related hazard, an immediate threat to the safety of the campus community or infrastructure, mechanical or equipment failure. Response to a civil disorder is handled in accordance with Administrative Order [No. 2](#).

2. Delegation of Authority—Institutional Operations

In the event that the President is absent or unavailable, the authority to act on behalf of the President is delegated in the order shown below to the following University officers:

- A. Provost and Executive Vice President
- B. Senior Vice President for Finance and Facilities
- C. Vice President and Vice Provost for Student Life
- D. Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Academic Affairs

3. Delegation of Authority—Localized Operations

For local emergencies, the Provost and Executive Vice President, the chancellors, vice presidents, vice provosts, vice chancellors, and deans, or their designees, have the authority to declare a temporary suspension of some or all the operations of a unit that is under their supervision. Examples of localized emergencies include, but are not limited to: power outages, floods, chemical spills, and hazards that affect a limited area of campus or other properties.

4. Identifying and Reporting Events that Pose a Risk to Institutional Operations

The University Police, UW Emergency Management, Environmental Health and Safety and other operational units with significant public safety, communications, or public health responsibilities (e.g., Facilities Services; UW Information Technology; UW Medicine Health System – for public emergencies; UW Bothell and UW Tacoma security departments; etc.) are responsible for identifying events that could present a risk to the University's operations or members of the University community. When a unit identifies such an event, the unit's senior administrator will inform the President, or the President's designee(s), of the nature of the event and the magnitude of the risk it presents to the University.

5. Declaration and Communication

In declaring a suspension of operations, the President, or the President's designee(s), will consult with senior University officers, local, state, or federal officials as appropriate and may activate the University's Emergency Response Management Plan.

Where it is reasonable to do so, and before notifying the general public of the decision to suspend operations, the President, or the President's designee, will inform the chancellors of the UW Bothell and UW Tacoma campuses. If a chancellor or other University official determines that it is necessary to suspend operations locally, the official will inform the President, or the President's designee(s), in a manner to be determined by the President. Where advance communication about the decision to suspend operations is not reasonable, notification will be made as soon as possible under the circumstances.

The President, or the President's designee(s), will also notify the University's Office of Media Relations and Communications of the decision to suspend operations. Communication of the notice of suspended operations will be by the methods deemed most appropriate, and may require activation of the University's Crisis Communication Plan consistent with the nature and timing of the event(s) giving rise to the suspension. To the degree practical, announcements of an operational suspension will include information about the nature of the situation, actions that individuals or units should or should not take, and the anticipated duration of the suspension, if known. The University will limit any suspension of operations to those functions most directly affected in order to minimize disruption of teaching, research, and public service programs. In limiting suspension of operations to those functions most directly affected, the University recognizes that the length of the suspension may vary by the function which in turn may impact the status of individuals as essential personnel.

6. Classified and Professional Staff Who Perform Essential Services

A number of University of Washington units provide essential services that continue to operate when other operations are suspended. Classified and professional staff in positions designated as performing an essential service are required to report to work during periods of suspended operations, unless otherwise notified. Units that perform essential services include, but are not limited to: UW Medicine Health System, Facilities Services, University Police, and Housing and Food Services. At least annually, University officers including, but not limited to, the chancellors, vice presidents, vice provosts, vice chancellors, and deans are expected to evaluate the operations under their control and identify those functions and/or positions that perform essential services. In accordance with Administrative Policy Statement [40.2](#), each officer will ensure that employees in positions designated as performing an essential service are notified of their status. The Vice President for Human Resources is responsible for providing information to any labor organizations that represents employees in positions designated as performing an essential service.

7. Compensation and Leave Use for Classified and Professional Staff During an Operational Suspension and/or Inclement Weather

Leave use and compensation during an operational suspension, or during inclement weather that does not result in an operational suspension, is governed by Administrative Policy Statement [45.2](#).

8. Extraordinary Circumstances

When the President, or the President’s designee(s), as established in [Section 3](#), determines that an emergency is of an extraordinarily severe or extended nature, the President, or the President’s designee(s), may authorize measures to mitigate the impact of the operational suspension on employees not required to be at work, and to support the employees who perform essential services and are required to report to work.

Such actions may include, but are not limited to, authorizing exceptional compensation or leave practices or other actions that the President, or the President’s designee(s), determine are necessary in order to provide for adequate staffing and retention of employees, and to sustain or restore University operations.

November 18, 1987; May 21, 1990; July 19, 2011.

For related information, see:

- Executive Order [No. 55](#), “University Health and Safety Programs: Policy and Responsibilities”
- Administrative Policy Statement [13.1](#), “Emergency Management”
- Administrative Policy Statement [40.2](#), “Designation of Classified and Professional Staff Employees Who Perform Essential Services”
- Administrative Policy Statement [43.15](#), “Time Off and Leave of Absence for Classified Non-Union Staff”
- Administrative Policy Statement [45.2](#), “Time Off Use and Compensation for Classified and Professional Staff During Suspended Operations and During Inclement Weather”