

Policy on Adverse Weather and Other Emergencies

Policy Title	Policy on Adverse Weather and Other Emergencies
Policy #	01.110.3
Policy Owner	Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Contact Information	Questions regarding this policy can be directed to the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at (401) 874-4341
Approved By	President of the University of Rhode Island
Effective Date	August 21, 2026
Next Review Date	No later than August 31, 2031
Who Needs to Know About this Policy	All faculty, staff, students, and Affiliates of the University
Definitions <i>Defined terms and shorthand references are capitalized throughout.</i>	Emergency. An event, including 1) a natural disaster such as a blizzard, flood, earthquake, hurricane or similar event that causes significant property damage or loss of life; 2) a declared public health emergency; 3) a Rhode Island state of emergency as designated via executive order by the governor of Rhode Island, 4) a U.S. national state of emergency as declared by the President of the United States; or 5) another situation that significantly disrupts the normal operations of the University such as an adverse weather event, institutional cyberattack, infrastructure failure, or similar disruption. Employee. Any person employed by the University, including faculty and staff, regardless of the source of funds within the University. Essential Employee. An Employee deemed critical to the operations of the University as determined by the Employee's Department Director depending on the nature of the Emergency. University Affiliate. Any individual who is not a faculty member, staff, or student who otherwise has a formal relationship with the University, including but not limited to visiting scholars, visiting students, research fellows, professional program participants, club sports coaches, and volunteers as well as Employees and associates of the URI Foundation, URI Research Foundation, and members of the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees. Vendors and contractors are not considered University Affiliates, except for those with an ongoing presence on the University campus as regular operations support staff.

Statutes, Regulations, and Policies Governing or Necessitating This Policy	Rhode Island Department of Administration Statewide Adverse Weather Policy (2019). University of Rhode Island Emergency Operations Plan.
Reason for Policy/Purpose	To provide information regarding the operations of the University of Rhode Island relative to both state-issued weather Emergencies and University-declared closures.
Forms Related to this Policy	None

Policy Statement

During adverse weather, natural disasters, or any other Emergencies, the State of Rhode Island or the University of Rhode Island (also, University) may determine it is necessary to close or curtail operations.

I. State Declared Adverse Weather Emergency

The Governor of the State of Rhode Island alone has the authority to determine whether or not there shall be a change in normal statewide business operations due to adverse weather conditions. In the event the Governor declares a State of Emergency relative to adverse weather, all University Employees shall follow the “Statewide Adverse Weather Policy” issued by the Department of Administration of the State of Rhode Island. This policy can be found on the Human Resources webpage as well as the Rhode Island Department of Administration Enterprise Policies page (<https://www.ri.gov/app/doa/policies/>).

II. University Operations During an Emergency

The University of Rhode Island may curtail its operations due to a local, regional, or national Emergency. This curtailment of operations may affect the entire institution or may be localized geographically or programmatically at the University.

Only the University President may declare an Emergency curtailment of operations at the University (barring statewide closure), though should the President be unavailable or incapacitated, this power shall rest with the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, and should the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs be unavailable or incapacitated, this power shall rest with the Vice President for Administration and Finance, who must additionally consult with the Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Initiatives. All actions relative to emergency curtailment of operations shall be made in consultation with the University Provost as well as leadership in the offices of Emergency Management, External Relations and Communications, Facilities Operations, Human Resources, Public Safety, and Student Affairs, with additional offices included as applicable.

Curtailment of operations specifically involving University operations at University locations off the Kingston campus (e.g., programs in Providence or at the Narragansett Bay Campus) shall be made in additional consultation with the primary leadership of those locations and/or programs.

The University may curtail operations due to an Emergency, including but not limited to the following actions:

A. Classes are Cancelled:

1. **Initial Declaration:** Under this declaration, all University classes at all locations (unless specified otherwise) are cancelled; depending on the Emergency, all currently scheduled asynchronous online classes may continue to be held; all Staff Employees are expected to report, unless directed otherwise by their supervisor; and all University buildings are open (unless specified otherwise). Campus services are expected to run normally, though services may be reduced due to staffing shortages or other challenges associated with the Emergency. The cancellation of classes includes the cancellation of campus activities occurring during the same period, unless otherwise specified by the official announcement.
2. **Alternative Course Delivery:** An alternative course delivery requirement may be established after the second calendar day of the Emergency that necessitated the cancellation of classes. Under this declaration, classes are to be held as scheduled, except that an alternative delivery mode must be engaged because access to the University campus or infrastructure is limited.

Notwithstanding the role of the President in declaring an emergency curtailment of operations, the initial requirement for alternative course delivery shall be determined by the University Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, in consultation with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee when possible.

In circumstances that require the continuation of an alternative course delivery mode longer than fifteen (15) calendar days, the decision to maintain this continued shift in program delivery must include consultation with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

- B. Cancellation of Campus Activities:** The cancellation of classes includes the cancellation of campus activities occurring during the same period, unless otherwise specified by the official announcement. The University additionally may announce specifically the cancellation of all or certain campus activities due to an Emergency.

Student-athletes are advised to refer to guidelines provided by the Department of Athletics regarding practices and games (on both weekdays and weekends).

- C. A Sector or Unit of the University is Closed:** Under this declaration, the operations of a specific campus, area, or unit of the University are curtailed. Classes or other programs or activities at that location or in the identified program are cancelled (unless noted otherwise in the announcement); buildings at that location or associated with the identified program may be closed. Employees whose workplace is the identified location or program shall follow guidance from their supervisor regarding alternate work locations (including remote work, as appropriate).

III. Compensation

If the University curtails operations such that Employees are prevented from performing their assigned duties, the University will continue compensation for the duration of the Emergency in accordance with applicable contracts, agreements, or grants. Compensation includes, but is not limited to, salaries, wages, and fringe benefits. Employees with pre-approved leave hours scheduled within their standard work shift during the hours of a declared Emergency shall proceed with that leave as planned; with such leave charged to the Employee's leave balance (not credited as administrative leave).

IV. Expectations to Report

If the University curtails operations due to an Emergency, the cancellation of classes for example, all staff Employees are expected to report to work as scheduled unless directed otherwise (for example due to the closure of a building or portion of the campus). Staff Employees may complete their scheduled work remotely at the discretion of that Employee's supervisor. Any staff Employee unable to report for regularly scheduled work or otherwise unable or unwilling to complete their assigned duties due to adverse weather conditions or the conditions of the Emergency may discharge, at the Employee's option, vacation leave, personal leave, or other appropriate administrative leave available to that Employee. Essential Employees are required to report to work.

V. Remote Work

Remote work may be allowed during an Emergency. Permission for remote work during an Emergency may be granted by the Employee's direct supervisor, provided that, if the Emergency continues beyond two (2) calendar days, the supervisor's approval must be in writing and for a specified period of time. An Employee who is not required by their supervisor to work during an Emergency shall not receive additional compensation for voluntary work performed. Remote Work Agreements, per the University's *Policy on Remote Work*, are not necessary under the conditions described in this policy.

VI. Communications

Only the Office of External Relations and Communications may announce the curtailment of operations. University students and Employees will be notified through official communications issued by the Office of External Relations and Communications; additional notices may be issued through the University's emergency alert system if necessary. The University will also announce any University-wide change in operations (e.g., class cancellation) on the main University webpage. In instances where closure or curtailment is local to specific buildings, specific physical areas of the University (including entire campuses), or specific programs, the announcement may be made via internal University communications only and, as appropriate, only to affected students or Employees.

The official communication regarding the closure of all or parts of the University shall include, at minimum, the following information:

- The specific campus or locations impacted (may include "All URI campuses and programs").
- Information about URI Online activities.
- If applicable, where to seek further information.

Exceptions

This policy applies only to Emergency circumstances, not any other planned closures or curtailment of University operations (e.g., planned power outage, planned building closures, etc.).

Where the provisions of this policy conflict with a provision of a collective bargaining agreement, the specific provisions of the collective bargaining agreement shall prevail.

Policy Review and Revisions

(Versions earlier than the first policy number may be paper only)

Policy #	Effective Date	Reason for Change	Changes to Policy
No #: Policy and Procedures for Snow Storms and Certain Emergencies	April 1989	Updated to new policy	Clarification regarding curtailments of operations
No #: Policy on Adverse Weather and/or Other Unusual Conditions	No Date	Update to new policy	Clarification regarding curtailments of operations
0.1.110.1	June 7, 2022	Policy review	Added specifications on curtailments, Presidential authority, remote work, communications, and compensation. This policy incorporates and supersedes the University policy on Compensation During an Emergency (02.112.1)
01.110.2	December 7, 2023	Scheduled Review	Added: Course delivery mode determined by Provost; new definition of Essential Employee; Sec. 4 applies to Staff only.
01.110.3	August 21, 2026	Minor Revision Requested	Shortened (from three days to two days) the period after which an alternative course delivery requirement may be established due to an Emergency that required the cancellation of classes; plus additional clarifying edits.