


Department of Public Safety
Policies and Procedures

<u>Title</u> Delays and Closures of University Operations	<u>SOP Number</u> 17.1.602
Approval Signature 	
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Delays and Closures of University Operations

- I. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance when unexpected situations occur that require consideration of delaying or closing operations of the University. Delays/Closures may include classes or events, and/or the need for non-essential employees to respond to work. Delays or closures may affect all University operations, or just specific campus locations or specific buildings. The circumstances requiring a delay or closure may involve life safety risks/threats, access to University property, or may be caused by a condition in or around a University property that makes the property unsuitable for its regular usage.

- II. **Policy:** The Department of Public Safety will take the lead in responding to any situation involving any threat of harm to persons or property that occurs on University property. This responsibility includes risks associated with students and employees safely traveling to school/work at the University of Cincinnati. This responsibility includes addressing the threat to the degree possible, working with available resources internal and/or external to the University to address the issue, contacting the person(s) responsible for functions within the affected building(s) if necessary to determine the viability of continuing or resuming normal operations, and communicating delays, closures, or special situations, as necessary.

It is the responsibility of the affected college or department to determine delays, closures, or necessary next-steps in any situation that does not pose of risk of harm to persons or property but may require a delay or closure of University operations. The Public Safety Department will assist the affected college or department with initial response, assessment, and decision-making as requested/necessary, but the decision regarding delays or closures as a result of a situation that does not pose a risk of harm lies with the affected college or department.

- For example, a power outage at a University building that does not involve an ongoing active threat (i.e. building on fire, severe structural damage to the building) and is not the result of criminal activity would be the responsibility of the affected college or department to determine if activities at that building will be delayed or cancelled as a result.

III. Information:

University Operations – Any function or activity scheduled to occur on University of Cincinnati property that is sponsored, hosted, or organized by an entity of the University. University Operations is broadly defined to include classes, meetings, events, and the normal operations of offices and employees of the University.

Essential Employees – employees whose presence is required at work regardless of a delay or closure of University operations. Each Department, College, Division, and/or Office of the University is responsible for identifying employees that are essential.

- Within the Public Safety Department, Division heads shall make decisions

Delays and Closures of University Operations

regarding which employees are essential or are not needed during a delay or closure. Police Division Supervisors, University Law Enforcement Officers, Security Officers, and Emergency Communication Dispatchers and who are scheduled to work first, second and third shift patrol when a delay or closure occurs are considered essential personnel. Fire Alarm Protection Systems Technicians are also considered essential personnel as well as personnel required to work a detail or attend court during a delay or closure, provided the detail or court is not cancelled or closed and reasonable notice is provided to the responding employee.

University Property – property owned or leased by the University for the purpose of classes, meetings, athletic events, performances, residential life, and other organized activities.

IV. Procedure:

A. Winter Weather-Related Situations

1. The on-duty University Police supervisor has the responsibility of following the snow removal policy during severe weather conditions for the University of Cincinnati.
 - a. The University of Cincinnati snow removal policy is updated annually and distributed to police supervisors.
 - b. University Hospital snow policy is updated periodically and distributed to police supervisors.
2. It is the responsibility of the Director of Public Safety, or designee, to make final decisions regarding delays or closures of University operations due to inclement winter weather.
 - a. Every effort will be made to make a decision and communicate any delays or closures by 5:30 AM, Monday through Saturday. However, winter weather hazards can develop or worsen at any time and the priority will always be to make delay or closure decisions based on safety regardless of the time of day/night. On Sunday, there are no scheduled classes, but delays/closures may be necessary for a scheduled event.
 - b. Conditions that affect one portion of the University but not others require separate consideration and decision-making. It is acceptable to announce a delay or closure at one campus that does not pertain to other University operations. (See Communications and Notifications section of this procedure.)
 - c. The UCPD OIC at the time inclement weather begins shall gather information on the potential severity and impact on University operations. General road and walkway conditions on and around all campuses should be assessed for safety, as well as any relevant information regarding scheduled events. This information shall be provided to the Director of Public Safety as soon as it is determined to pose a significant hazard to safe travel. If

Delays and Closures of University Operations

inclement weather conditions develop overnight, the OIC will ensure the Director of Public Safety is notified by 0400 hours.

- d. Generally when the University is closed due to a winter weather emergency, events on University property scheduled during the closure are postponed/cancelled. If any University office, college or department is hosting or sponsoring an event and they choose to continue with the event despite a delay or closure, it is the responsibility of the hosting/sponsoring office, college or department to announce appropriate information (i.e. continue as scheduled, delayed but not cancelled, postponed to a different date, etc.) as well as perform other necessary communication related to their event. Commonly, exceptions may be made for extraordinary circumstances as identified below, and coordination must occur with the Facilities Department and the Parking Department when this occurs:
 - 1) Athletic events may not be cancelled if both teams as well as necessary officials are present.
 - 2) CCM events may not be cancelled if the performers are present and tickets have been distributed for the performance.
 - 3) Some functions within the College of Medicine, the UC Reading campus, and the Academic Health Center are generally never cancelled. If extreme circumstances dictate that a closure of these functions is appropriate, that decision will be made by the President of the University, and communicated by the Department of Public Safety using established emergency communications channels.
 - 4) Some research functions require daily attention and are therefore generally never cancelled.
 - 5) It is the responsibility of the UCPD Field Operations Bureau Commander to coordinate with Facilities and Parking as necessary when delays or closures affect events to place safety resources and get roadways and walkways treated to the extent possible.

B. Communications and Notifications of Delays/Closures Due to Inclement Weather

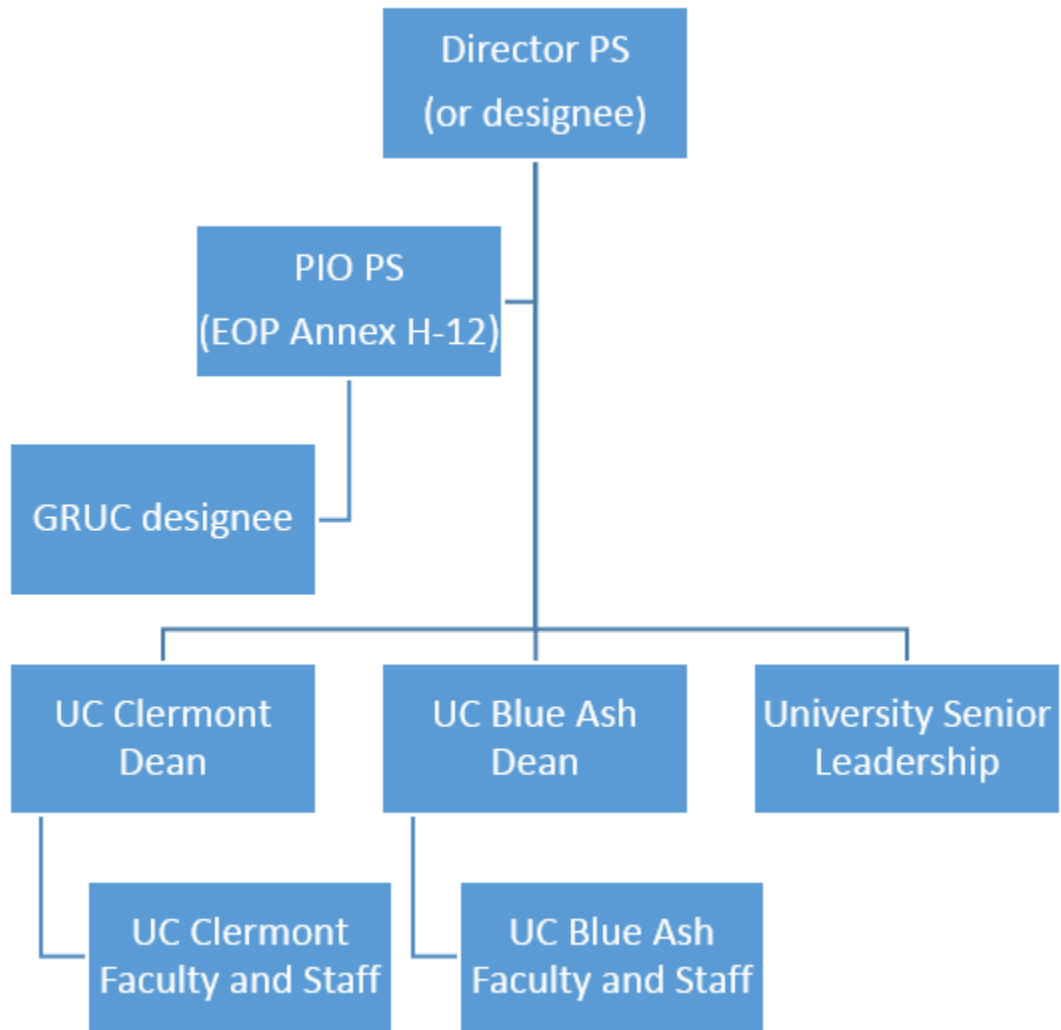
1. When considering the need for a delay or closure, and again upon determining that a delay or closure is appropriate, the Director of Public Safety or designee should communicate with the following:
 - a. Once a decision is reached, the Director of Public Safety will communicate any delays or closures to the senior leadership of the University.
 - b. The Dean of Clermont College should be contacted for input into weather, walkway, and road conditions affecting the Clermont College campus area. Once a decision is reached, the Dean of the Clermont College can communicate any special circumstances that may apply at that time to Clermont College employees and staff.

Delays and Closures of University Operations

- c. The Dean of the Blue Ash campus should be contacted for input into weather, walkway and road conditions affecting the Blue Ash campus area. Once a decision is reached, the Dean of the Blue Ash campus can communicate any special circumstances that may apply at that time to Blue Ash campus employees and staff.
- d. If a decision is made to delay or close any University property due to inclement weather, the Director of Public Safety (or designee) will contact the Public Information Officer of the Public Safety Department to initiate necessary steps to effectively communicate the delay or closure via established communications networks. Please see the University of Cincinnati Emergency Operations Plan (Annex H-12) for a complete description of this process.
- e. The Public Information Officer of the Department of Public Safety will notify the campus community via Rave Alert (text message, Rave Guardian message and digital signage), email, UC Alert webpage and the campus status line. University Communications will update the uc.edu homepage and contact the media, when necessary.

See chart below

Delays and Closures of University Operations



C. Delays/Closures Not Related to Winter Weather

1. Occasionally, severe weather conditions not related to snow, ice, or cold temperatures affect University operations. Additionally, the need for a delay or closure could occur as the result of a flooded building or some other activity in or near University property that makes use of a building unsuitable.
 - a. In any situation not related to winter weather (i.e. a tornado, criminal activity in the area, a hazmat spill, etc.) that presents an imminent risk of harm to persons or property owned or controlled by the University, and at the direction of the OIC, the UCPD Emergency Communications Center will

Delays and Closures of University Operations

utilize the Simplex Emergency Alert Voice System to issue audible warnings in all affected University buildings.

- b. The UCPD Emergency Communications Center will dispatch Law Enforcement Officers and a Police supervisor to the scene to render aid, stabilize the situation to the extent possible, and assess next steps. The UCPD OIC will make notifications as necessary to ensure the Public Safety command staff is properly notified of the situation.
- c. The UCPD Emergency Communications Center will notify the Director and Assistant Director of Business Continuity and Emergency Management, who will respond or discuss the situation with the UCPD OIC to assist in determining necessary next steps to stabilize the situation, ensure appropriate notifications are made to the affected office, college, or department, and determine if University operations in the affected area may continue or resume.
- d. If the conditions cause damage to University facilities or make access to or around the University dangerous, the Director of Public Safety will make final decisions on delays and closures after consultation with the Director and/or Assistant Director of Business Continuity and Emergency Management and the affected office, college, or department.

D. Delays/Closures Caused by a Utility Failure and Outages

1. Occasionally, a utility failure will make University buildings unsuitable for use for a period of time.
 - a. Upon becoming aware of such a situation, the UCPD Emergency Communications Center will dispatch Law Enforcement Officers to the scene to assess the situation, mitigate further damage if possible, assist any person in distress, and attend to any immediate risks to safety.
 - b. The UCPD Emergency Communications Center will notify the Director and Assistant Director of Business Continuity and Emergency Management, who will determine necessary next steps to stabilize the situation and ensure the affected office, college, or department is notified.
 - c. Decisions regarding delays or closures that may be required in such situations are the responsibility of the affected office, college, or department.

E. Communications and Notifications of Delays/Closures Caused by Utility Failure and Outages

1. For significant event, Utilities Director, Facilities AVP or designee directly contacts:
 - a. Director of Public Relations West or Director of Public Relations East
 - b. Director of Public Safety
 - 1) The following determinations are made regarding the utility failure or outage:

Delays and Closures of University Operations

- a) Cause of failure or outage.
 - b) Expected length of failure or outage.
 - c) Impact of failure or outage.
 - d) Has failure or outage event caused serious injury and/or death and/or is likely the result of criminal activity.
 - e) Does failure or outage represent a significant potential for crisis, emergency situation, threat to public safety, serious injury or death.
- 2) If D and E do NOT apply, Director of Public Relations (West/East) directs communication in coordination with
 - a) Director of Digital Communications
 - b) University Spokesperson (to address media queries)
 - c) UCPD Public Information Officer and/or appropriate college/unit communicators as necessary
 - 3) If D and E DO apply, and for all crisis or emergency situations, Public Safety Director as incident commander directs communications in coordination with
 - a) UCPD Public Information Officer
 - b) Director of Public Relations
 - c) Director of Digital Communications
 - 4) Dependent on power availability for communications channels, potential outreach/information avenues are:
 - a) E-mail - Distribution for closing, crisis and emergency bulletins is by UC Public Safety to: BULLETIN (or depending on context, BULLETIN-Clery)
 - 5) Non-emergency/informational distribution by University Communications to either campus community or targeted to specific college/building occupants.
 - 6) If appropriate, personnel assigned to University Communications can access large email lists for notifications to the University community:
 - a) UC-Staff listserv; UC-FTFaculty listerv; UC-PTFaculty listerv; All_Students@mail.uc.edu (in bcc line and from exchange accounts)
 - b) UC Public Safety may assist with communications, upon request, by issuing emails and/or posting information on social media, post messages to digital signs in Tangeman University Center, Campus Recreation Center and other equipped buildings, update campus status message at 556-3333, update the UC Alerts page at <http://www.uc.edu/alert.html>
 - 7) University Communications will initiate college or university web banner as appropriate or initiate social media outreach as necessary.

Delays and Closures of University Operations

- a) University Communication may post a news release or web banner on college/unit site or university-level page.
 - b) University Communications may contact Springmeyer service to inform media of newsworthy aspect of event and/or respond to news media queries related to event.
 - c) University Communications may contact UCit to change voicemail message at 556-6000.
- 8) If only Clermont or Blue Ash are affected, communication personnel at those campuses will generally handle communication needs in coordination with University Communications.