



UAMS MEDICAL CENTER POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Number: HR.2.02

Policy Title: **Inclement Weather**

Source: Administration

Approved By: Executive Administrative Committee

Date Approved: November 27, 1995

Review/Revised Date: 1/01, 2/02, 11/02, 12/03, 1/05, 8/06, 10/11, 11/13, 2/14, 10/15

Replaces Policy:

PURPOSE

Inclement weather preparedness for the UAMS Medical Center encompasses inpatient and ambulatory/outpatient areas and all employees and providers working in the Integrated Clinical Enterprise (ICE).

DEFINITIONS

- I. UAMS Medical Center
Shall include all employees and providers who deliver or provide direct patient care as well as the supporting services for patient care operations. Supporting services is broadly defined and would encompass areas such as the integrated revenue cycle, financial management office, professional staff office, medical center human resources, etc. In essence, any person who supports any aspect of patient care delivery both directly and indirectly is considered essential to operations. Service Lines are included in this term.
- II. Department
Shall include all inpatient and ambulatory/outpatient areas, services and programs.
- III. Director
Shall be broadly defined to include any position with leadership or supervisory responsibilities. The role of the Director would include core services, inpatient ambulatory and support areas that are part of the UAMS Medical Center.

POLICY

Patient care is the primary mission of the UAMS Medical Center, regardless of weather conditions. By virtue of our commitment to patient care, Departments are essential and will remain open. In UAMS Medical Center Departments where workload is

significantly diminished as a result of inclement weather, Directors will define Departmental mechanisms to maintain efficient operations. In accordance with the UAMS Administrative Guide Inclement Personnel Weather Policy, UAMS Medical Center includes all hospital inpatient services, outpatient clinics and ambulatory programs.

PROCEDURES

I. Communication

The determination to implement the Inclement Weather Policy is made in collaboration with the Hospital Administrator on duty, Vice Chancellor for Campus Operations (or designee) and the Provost. The decision to implement the Inclement Weather Policy is influenced by reports from the National Weather Service and local media. This decision is made consistent with community closings. Inclement Weather status is assessed on a shift-by-shift basis. The duration of inclement weather status is for the length or remaining portion of each shift, depending upon notice of cancellation by Hospital Administration.

Employees may check inclement weather status by calling their Department's staff scheduling phone number as applicable. Inclement weather status will also be posted on UAMS web sites and may be communicated via e-mail.

- A. The Hospital Administrator on Call will notify the Vice Chancellor for Communications, who will convey the decision to the greater UAMS community and media. The Vice Chancellor for Communications & Marketing or designee is the sole contact for communicating the UAMS Medical Center's inclement weather status to the media. The media is encouraged to utilize the term UAMS Medical Center specific to this policy.
- B. During traditional business hours, (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday) the Hospital Administrator on call will notify the telephone operator and all hospital Departments and Service Line Leadership when inclement weather status has been declared and lifted.
- C. During non-business hours, the ADON on duty will notify the telephone operator and coordinate notification of all necessary inpatient and outpatient Departments.
- D. Notification is provided routinely by the Vice Chancellor for Communications through a global e-mail and postings on the UAMS web site; however, as appropriate, the ADON may utilize phone or pager to notify Departments directly affected during weekends or nights.

II. Staffing

- A. Directors who work for the UAMS Medical Center are considered essential to operations during inclement weather and should proactively plan to be present unless they are on leave that was approved prior to the declaration of inclement weather. If a Department Director or provider is on pre-approved leave, arrangements must be made for a designee to be present and responsible for the Department or provider's obligations in service to patients and staff.
- B. Department Directors may develop a plan for Inclement Weather staffing and submit the plan for approval by the Medical Center Human Resources Department prior to forecasts of inclement weather. The plan must outline provision for all Department responsibilities. The plan should be comprehensive, address each position in the Department and apply to all inclement weather events. Inclement weather conditions can trigger a Code Green and a Code Gray. Each Department's inclement weather plan should incorporate the Department's disaster plan and accommodations in the event of a code during an inclement weather event.

The Department staffing plan may include provisions such as:

- 1. Work from home for designated positions during inclement weather if technology allows continued work duties to be executed.
 - 2. If the employee only works part of the day at home, he or she shall submit a vacation leave request for the remainder of the day.
 - 3. Designated A/B teams of employees to work alternate inclement weather events with reduced levels of staffing to accommodate decreased work load. If an employee does not work, they must take vacation time or leave without pay.
- C. All scheduled employees and providers are to make every effort to come to work at the beginning of his or her regular shift.
 - 1. During inclement weather status, all hourly employees reporting to work on time will receive special travel pay of two additional hours per shift.
 - 2. Any employee (hourly or salaried) arriving within two hours of the beginning of his or her shift will be paid for the entire shift.
 - 3. Any employee arriving later than two hours from the beginning of his or her shift must use vacation time or leave without pay for the missed time.
 - 4. Any employee who reports to work late on an inclement weather day normally will not receive a TARDY on his or her attendance record.

- D. Any employee or provider who is not on pre-approved leave prior to forecasts of inclement weather by the National Weather Service or area media and fails to come to work without Director approval is not eligible for pay for the hours missed and may be subject to disciplinary action.
- E. Any employee claiming sick leave during forecasts of inclement weather and defined inclement weather periods must have a physician's letter of Proof of Illness. The letter must include a statement of condition along with the physician's original signature and date.
- F. Ambulatory Clinics
 - 1. The Director must ensure providers, clinical staff and administrative staff are available to serve patients and families during inclement weather events. Staff must be available to satisfy the needs for:
 - a. Direct patient care
 - b. Appointment scheduling and rescheduling
 - c. Telephone calls
 - d. Integrated Revenue Cycle functions
 - e. Prescription refills
 - f. Other needs unique to the patient population
 - 2. Off-campus clinics in facilities not managed by UAMS may be forced to close because of building/parking lot conditions. Employees scheduled to work in these locations may be asked to work in another UAMS location. If the employee does not work, they must take vacation time or leave without pay.
 - a. Patients must be notified by phone, e-mail, MyChart message and other available means in advance of their scheduled appointment that the clinic is closed.
 - b. Clinic phones must have an operator or voice-mail message notifying patients of clinic closure and how to reschedule appointments.

III. Release of Staff

Once a Director has determined that the Department is adequately staffed to handle patient needs and Department responsibilities, the Department Director may allow employees to leave before the end of their scheduled shift. Employees not working their complete scheduled shift must submit vacation leave or request time off without pay. This determination shall include consideration of areas with interdependent/need.

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IV. Other Accommodations

During periods of inclement weather, efforts will be made to support the needs of employees/providers and their families. These may include temporary housing, meals and other accommodations. Communication regarding the availability of these services will be coordinated by the Administrator on Call.

REFERENCES

Administrative Guide Inclement Weather Personnel Policy

http://hr.uams.edu/files/2015/03/Inclement_Weather_Scenarios_3-10-2015.pdf are located on the [HR Communications page](#).