

Authorized Closings for the Northern Virginia Center

11/22/10

From: The Office of the Associate Dean of the Graduate School in the National Capital Region and Director of the Northern Virginia Center

Information on authorized closings and designation of emergency personnel: If it becomes necessary to close the Northern Virginia Center due to inclement weather or an emergency, the Emergency Management Team will use the following communications channels to announce the decision:

- The Virginia Tech Northern Virginia Center homepage
- The Virginia Tech National Capital Region homepage
- The Virginia Tech homepage if access to local internet is unavailable (via Public Relations in Blacksburg, VA)
- Broadcast emails to all nvc.vt.edu, student, and ncr.vt.edu accounts
- The weather/emergency hotline (703.538.8325)
- Local media (radio and television stations)

The following Blacksburg offices will also be notified of delayed openings and closings:

- Dean of the Graduate School
- University Relations
- Video Broadcasting Services

There may be times when the university initially decides to open based on the information available, but deteriorating weather conditions result in a decision for a delayed opening or for an all-day closing. Employees, students, and visitors continue to check the communications channels listed above for any changes.

For early closings, the Associate Dean and Director and/or staff will also notify Deans, Directors, and Department Heads via email using the Northern Virginia Center and National Capital Region listservs. Once notified by the Associate Dean and Director's office, we ask that you follow your departmental communication plan to ensure that each of your areas has received the information about the closing and they are taking steps to ensure that employees and students have been notified, including those who may be working or studying in labs, classrooms, off-site, or other areas of the building.

The university's video-conferencing classes (often referred to as VTEL) will be cancelled when the Blacksburg campus is closed, with the exception of videoconference class lectures originating from the Northern Virginia Center. In the event of a Blacksburg campus closing, Northern Virginia Center faculty will have the option to either record their lecture in their regularly scheduled time slot or request a makeup recording of the class at a later date. Requests to record during a Blacksburg campus closing will be handled at a reduced level of service by Video Broadcast Services staff at the Northern Virginia Center. Class recordings will be processed for video on demand and posted to

the Video Broadcast Services servers within two business days after the Blacksburg campus resumes normal operations.

Department Responsibilities

Identification of Emergency Personnel: Emergency personnel are those employees assigned to positions identified by their departments as necessary to the maintenance of the vital operations and services of the university. Emergency personnel can be salaried or wage employees. Emergency personnel are required to work during an authorized closing, and should be promptly notified of any change in their designation. While many emergency personnel remain in that status throughout the year, department heads and directors may also designate certain employees as emergency personnel depending on specific circumstances. Employees who have been designated as emergency personnel must be informed of their status and any specific expectations.

Departments should complete their Emergency Personnel Roster and update it as needed. The roster is for departmental use and should not be returned to Facilities or Human Resources.

Development of a Department Communication Plan: Each department should have a communication plan for supervisors and employees to follow for emergency situations.

Authorized Closing (AC) Schedule and Recording Authorized Closing Leave and Work Hours: For the purpose of recording Authorized Closing leave and time worked, the following rules will apply unless otherwise stated in closing announcements.

- For a delayed opening, the university will close beginning at 12:01 a.m. of that day until the stated opening time. At the Northern Virginia Center a delayed opening time of two (2) means that the building will open at 11:00 a.m. (based on a 9:00 a.m. work day start time).
- For an all-day closing, the university will be closed beginning at 12:01 a.m. of that day and will re-open at 12:01 of the next work day.
- For an early closing, the university will be closed from the stated time of the day until midnight of that same day.

The Associate Dean and Director's office will report the closing information to the main campus. Human Resources or the Associate Dean and Director's staff will provide specific instructions to National Capital Region department leave representatives following each authorized closing. All authorized closing leave and time worked must be recorded in the university's leave system.

When the Virginia Tech Northern Virginia Center remains open during inclement weather please encourage your employees to discuss their safety concerns about travel to and from work with their supervisors so that management will be aware of potential hazards that could prevent them from reaching their place of work in inclement weather. If employees find themselves in situations where they think their safety may be

compromised, they should be strongly encouraged to make reasonable and rational choices when deciding whether to come to work or stay home. These decisions must, however, be communicated with the supervisor as soon as possible.

When the university remains open, non-emergency personnel, who anticipate transportation difficulties due to inclement weather conditions, may seek permission from supervisors to shorten their normal work shift through the use of accrued leave. Supervisors should make every effort to accommodate these requests. The designation of Liberal Leave (sometimes called Unscheduled Leave) is used in the Northern Virginia and metropolitan area and may be referred to in closing information for the Northern Virginia Center. It means employees who cannot report for work can request unscheduled leave for the entire work day and employees are expected to notify their supervisors of their decision to take unscheduled leave.

Employees who have physical disabilities and limited mobility should discuss inclement weather and safety issues with their supervisors. This would include employees who have accommodations approved under Policy 4075 through the Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator, who use the handicapped parking tags, or who have otherwise communicated their needs to their supervisors. Managers are encouraged to consider options, when appropriate and reasonable, through flexible scheduling of make-up time within the same work week or working from home (see Telecommuting Policy 4325). These decisions must be made on a case-by-case basis according to the needs of the department and the position of the employee. Questions about accommodations should be directed to Pam Vickers, ADA Coordinator, 540/231.9718, or adainfo@vt.edu at the main campus, Blacksburg, VA. To view the Northern Virginia Center *Policy 5: Inclement Weather*, go to www.nvc.vt.edu/intranet/resources.

Salaried employees who do not report to work as scheduled must charge time missed to annual, compensatory or overtime leave, sick, or leave without pay as appropriate, unless the supervisor can adjust the hours of work in the same workweek to make up for the missed hours. Supervisors may also allow employees up to a maximum of one hour past the start of their normal shift to report to work.

Wage employees are compensated for hours worked.

Information on closings may be found in university Policy 4305, Authorized Closings.

All salaried employees will receive an informational bulletin about authorized closings, but we ask that you ensure that your non-salaried (wage/adjunct) and student employees are also informed of your departmental communications procedures.

Should you have questions concerning the authorized closing policy and procedures, please contact Melissa Ball at 540/231.7784, main campus, Blacksburg, VA.

For information about whether the Blacksburg campus is open or closed, employees and campus visitors should check the following official communication channels:

- The Virginia Tech homepage
- Broadcast emails to all vt.edu accounts
- The university's weather/emergency hotline, 540/231.6668
- The university switchboard 540/231.6000
- VT Phone Alerts
- VT Desktop Alerts