PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define the process and provide guidance to be used when Morehouse School of Medicine will cancel classes or close due to inclement weather, emergency conditions, natural disasters or other unexpected emergencies or hazardous conditions.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all Morehouse School of Medicine offices, departments and facilities.

POLICY

The closing or delayed opening of Morehouse School of Medicine due to inclement weather or other emergencies will be determined by the President, or his designee, in consultation with the Dean and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. Such closing or delay would include the Westview campus, Morehouse Medical Associates, Comprehensive Family Healthcare Center, Buggyworks, and all other off-campus buildings. Decisions regarding patient care and appointments will be left to the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs and the Executive Director of Morehouse Medical Associates.

In the event of inclement weather, the School will make one of three announcements: MSM is closed; MSM will delay opening until a specific time; or MSM will close at a specific time.

- In the event of a closing or delayed opening, the primary source for information about the School’s operations will be the School’s webpage (www.msm.edu). In addition, the Office of Public Safety will coordinate e-mail notification and text messages about School closures or delays via the Morehouse School of Medicine Emergency Notification System.

- The Office of Marketing and Communications will place the appropriate message, along with any updates, on the School’s main number (404) 752-1500. Students, staff and faculty may call this number to hear a pre-recorded message.

- The Office of Marketing and Communications will notify the following local media outlets in the event MSM closes, is delayed to open or close early due to inclement weather:
If inclement weather develops overnight, every attempt is made to post announcements and notify media by 6:30 a.m. When hazardous weather conditions occur during regular business hours, a decision to close early will be made at the earliest possible time. A closing decision which affects evening classes will be made by 2:00 p.m. The School will follow the same notification procedures as above.

Those employees designated as “essential personnel” may be expected to report to work in the event of a School closing or delayed opening. Designated essential personnel are generally defined as those employed in the areas of public safety, animal care, and facilities management. Department heads are responsible for designating essential personnel and notifying those employees whether they need to report to work prior to a weather emergency. Essential Personnel who fail to report to work as directed may be subject to disciplinary action and required to charge the missed hours to vacation leave or leave without pay, as appropriate.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

A. LATE FOR WORK ALLOWANCES

When adverse weather conditions could generally be expected to cause some employees to be late for work, reasonable judgment is to be exercised on the part of both employees and supervisors relative to on-time requirements. Authority for granting allowances for unique travel problems rests with the supervisors and/or department heads and the Human Resources Department.

B. COMPENSATION AND RECORDING ABSENCE DUE TO EMERGENCY CLOSING

NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEES

1. Non-exempt essential personnel who are required to work during a School closure or delayed opening will be paid their regular rate of pay for the actual number of hours worked.

2. If the School closes for an entire work day, employees who are scheduled to work will be paid for their regular shift.

Currently, MSM has outsourced the facilities management function to Sodexo. All facilities management employees are subject to and governed by Sodexo’s policies.
3. If the School closes for part of the work day, employees who report to work when the School opens will be paid for their entire shift. Any amount of the scheduled workday that the employee does not work when the School is officially open will be charged to the employee’s vacation leave balance or will be unpaid (if the employee has no leave balance).

4. Employees who are unable to come to work when a partial-day closure occurs must notify their supervisors as soon as possible. With their supervisors’ approval, employees may use accrued vacation leave or may work an equivalent number of hours during the remainder of the work week.

5. Temporary employees are only paid for hours actually worked during inclement weather.

EXEMPT EMPLOYEES

Exempt employees will receive their regular salary. No leave balances should be reduced due to inclement weather or other emergency closings. Employees should work with their supervisors to ensure work expectations are met.

C. FAILURE TO REPORT TO WORK WHEN MSM IS OPEN

It is understood that each employee ultimately must decide if conditions make travel safe or unwise; that is employees are not asked to travel if they feel they are taking undue risk in doing so. An employee who is unable to get to work because of weather-related conditions, even though the School is open, may use vacation leave, or elect to take the day without pay.