



Onsite Essential Employee Guidelines

Overview

Emergencies and situations will arise that require the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign to modify or restrict certain operations and/or services for limited periods of time. However, the University as a whole, will never completely shut down.

Therefore, it is paramount that certain critical functions be maintained to keep the University operational. These functions are necessary to protect the life and safety of faculty, staff, students, and visitors who remain on, or who must come to, campus during an emergency. Functions required to restore the University promptly to its normal operations must also be maintained during the emergency or curtailed operations.

The need to maintain other operations or services will vary depending on the nature of the emergency, when it occurs, and the impact to the affected unit. For example, services which are critical for Facilities and Services to respond to a snowstorm, or a flood may call for similar staffing needs, but a flood and a snowstorm may trigger entirely different challenges for required actions and staffing at the Library. The preservation of research projects, material, and livestock is another prime example where attention to specific requirements will vary during an emergency.

Planning for the delivery of services and the maintenance of operations that are critical in some situations, but not others, requires departments to conduct scenario planning to explore the potential impact of different emergency situations. It will also require them to have detailed Business Continuity Plans (BCP) which are flexible enough to meet situations and solve problems that are not entirely foreseeable. This requires detailed unit and department-level communication strategies and systems that will be used during a modification or restriction of normal operations.

While critical functions must be sustained, the University encourages employees to consider their personal safety and local conditions in determining their ability to commute to work in extreme weather or other emergency conditions. It is also important to note that employees working remotely during an emergency may be required to adjust their work schedule and location based on necessary adjustments related to the emergency.

Onsite Essential Employee Definition

On-Site Essential Employees (Critical onsite operations): Employees who conduct a range of operations and services that are typically essential to continue critical operations of the University. Each unit needs to determine which operations and/or services will be designated as “critical.”

Continuity Planning Requirement

The university and all colleges, departments, and units on campus are required to develop and maintain (including updating and testing on an annual basis) a business continuity plan. [Policy number FO-14 of the University of Illinois Campus Administrative Manual](#) outlines the requirement. The University of Illinois Police Department Office of Campus Emergency Management is available to assist units in continuity planning efforts. You can find more information, including the web-based “Illini Ready” continuity planning form at <https://police.illinois.edu/emergency-preparedness/continuity-planning/>.

Identifying Critical Functions and Services

In the context of business continuity planning, a critical function is defined as a collection of activities normally performed by your unit or department that must continue during an emergency situation.

A critical function:

- enables the University to provide vital services, maintain the safety and well-being of the campus community, ensure continuity of administration, and/or protect the University’s assets
- enables support for teaching and research to continue

Critical functions and services include those necessary to:

1. Protect life and safety
2. Assure campus security
3. Maintain key human and animal health services
4. Maintain key student resident services (including food service)
5. Preserve research projects and infrastructure
6. Maintain business, finance, and physical infrastructure necessary to operations and services during an emergency or to the prompt restoration of normal operations and services.

To begin identifying your unit or department critical functions, consider the following questions:

1. What activities are normally performed by your department or unit?
2. In summary, what does your unit do?
3. What action words accurately describe the purpose for your department?
4. Your department performs various operations. What is provided to the campus as a result?
5. What service(s) does your department provide?

Levels of Criticality

Critical 1: Must be continued at normal or increased service load; cannot pause; necessary to life, health, security (Examples: hazardous materials cleanup, police services, animal care)

Critical 2: Must be continued, if at all possible, perhaps at reduced capacity; pausing completely will have grave consequences (Examples: purchasing, functioning of data networks, at-risk research)

Critical 3: May pause if forced to do so, but must resume in 30 days or sooner (Examples: classroom instruction, research, payroll, student advising)

Deferrable: May pause; resume when conditions permit (Examples: solicit new grant opportunities, routine building maintenance, training, marketing)