

1500.1 Institute Closings

Purpose To establish the protocols to implement an Institute closing.

Policy During an emergency, a decision will be made by the President or President's designee regarding the closing of the Institute. In all cases of closing, some key employees, as determined by the appropriate Cabinet Member or Portfolio Owner, will be required to be at work.

In the event of an emergency during the class/workday, the President or his/her designee will make a determination regarding the cancellation of classes and will make a determination regarding whether to implement an Institute Closing or to invoke the Liberal Leave Policy. (See Human Resources Policy #1500.3, *Liberal Leave Policy*.) The appropriate Cabinet Members will be informed, and will then inform their employees and units reporting to them. A decision on canceling evening classes is generally made by 2:00 p.m.

Procedure TROY CAMPUS

Local radio and TV stations and media outlets in the Capital Region will be informed of the closing by the Office of the President or designee in order that they may make a public announcement.

Inquiries by students, faculty, and staff should be referred to the Department of Public Safety Closing/Delay Information Line (518) 276-6600.

HARTFORD CAMPUS

Local radio and TV stations and media outlets in the Hartford metropolitan area will be informed of the closing by the Office of the President or designee in order that they may make a public announcement.

Inquiries by students, faculty, and staff should be referred to the Hartford Campus Reception Desk by calling (860) 548-2400 or (800) 433-4723 (press "6" for emergency/weather closing information); the Groton Site should call (860) 449-8157; or visit our website www.ewp.rpi.edu/hartford/webgen/closing.

1500.2 Violence Policy

Purpose To establish a zero-tolerance violence policy at Rensselaer in its working, living and learning environments.

Policy Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute does not tolerate acts or threats of violence committed by or against employees and students in the working, living and learning environment. Rensselaer strictly prohibits employees and students from making threats or engaging in violent acts.

This policy applies to all employees, including faculty, staff, student employees and members of the President's Cabinet.

Procedure Prohibited Conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical injury to another person.
- Engaging in behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury in another person.
- Engaging in behavior that subjects another individual to extreme emotional distress, such as bullying.
- Possessing, brandishing, or using a weapon while on Rensselaer premises or engaged in Rensselaer business.
- Intentional damage to property.
- Threatening to injure an individual or damage property.
- Committing injurious acts motivated by, or related to, domestic violence or sexual harassment.

Identifying and Responding to Risks

Rensselaer identifies and responds to violence hazards in the work, living and learning environment as follows:

- **Threat Assessment**

Rensselaer's Comprehensive Emergency Response Plan provides for a threat assessment to evaluate Rensselaer's vulnerability to violence and determine the appropriate preventative measures. This review includes, but is not limited to, inspecting security measures, analyzing records of violent incidents and monitoring trends, and conducting screening surveys to learn about employee and student security concerns. The Department of Public Safety maintains records of all threats and incidents of violence committed against employees. Access to such records can only be authorized by the Director of Public Safety.

- **Security Planning for At-Risk Employees and Students**

Some employees are known to be at risk for violence because of the nature of his/her job. Other employees and students can be at risk because they are subject to violence, threats, or harassment from a current or former spouse or partner or other non-employee. The Department of Public Safety personnel along with the Division of Human Resources for faculty and staff, and the Office of the Dean of Students for students, works with at-risk employees and their supervisors, and students to develop safety plans that address the specific risks employees and students may face while on campus.

- **Pre-Hire Screening**

The Division of Human Resources takes reasonable steps to review job candidates' backgrounds to determine if they have a history of committing violent acts or making threats. Pre-hire screening generally consists of reference checks with prior employers, but the screening can include rigorous background investigations for safety-sensitive positions and jobs involving extensive, unsupervised contact with the public.

Guidelines for Handling Violent Situations

The Department of Public Safety maintains and distributes to all employees and students detailed guidelines and procedures for handling violence and threats in the work, living and learning environment.

The guidelines are developed with the advice of local law enforcement personnel and/or qualified security consultants. Rensselaer's Emergency Planning Committee is responsible for periodically reviewing the guidelines to ensure they are adequate and up-to-date. If a violent incident occurs, the Emergency Planning Committee must re-evaluate the guidelines and procedures and modify them accordingly.

Support for Victims of Violence

Victims of violent incidents in the work, living and learning environment might have to contend with a variety of medical, psychological, and legal consequences. Rensselaer accommodates victims of workplace violence by:

- Referring victims to appropriate community resources, such as medical centers, Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), victim advocacy groups, legal aid, and domestic violence shelters.
- Providing flexible work hours or short-term or extended leave of absence for employees, and leaves of absence for students.
- Cooperating with law enforcement personnel in the investigation of the crime and the prosecution of the offender.

- Providing a debriefing for employees and students 24 to 48 hours after a serious violent occurrence to explain what happened and what steps are being taken by Rensselaer to support affected employees and students.

Rensselaer prohibits discrimination and retaliation on the basis of being a victim of domestic violence. (See Human Resources Policy #600.1, *Non-Discrimination/EEO Policy Statement*.)

Enforcement

The Division of Human Resources, the Office of the Dean of Students and the Department of Public Safety personnel must immediately investigate any reported violence, harassment, or threats committed on Rensselaer premises.

All employees and students who commit violent acts or who otherwise violate this policy are subject to corrective action or discipline, up to and including termination of employment for employees and expulsion for students.

Rensselaer will seek the prosecution of all of those who engage in violence on its premises or against its students or employees while they are engaged in employer business.

Rensselaer strictly prohibits retaliation against any person for reporting, filing, testifying, assisting or participating in any manner in any investigation or proceeding involving allegations of violence, discrimination, harassment, illegal or unethical action. (See Human Resources Policy #600.8, *Reporting, Investigation and Resolution Procedures for Complaints Involving Discrimination, Harassment, Retaliation, or Unethical Actions*.)

1500.3 Liberal Leave Policy

Purpose To establish the process to implement “liberal leave” during inclement weather or emergency situations.

Policy As residential university, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute requires campus services to be available at all times. To provide these services, Rensselaer will make every effort to remain open at all scheduled times. However, during inclement weather or emergency situations, it may be deemed necessary to allow “liberal leave” for non-essential staff.

This Liberal Leave policy provides all staff the option of utilizing Paid Time Off (PTO) or leave without pay, without the leave being previously scheduled and approved in advance by their immediate supervisor. Also, this policy provides staff with a grace period to arrive two-hours later than the normal start of their shift or a grace period to leave two-hours earlier than the normal end time of their shift without being charged PTO leave when Liberal Leave is in effect.

Staff requesting Liberal Leave must follow departmental procedures to request a late arrival, an early departure or an absence. Any absence or departure beyond the two-hour grace period will require staff to use their accrued Paid Time-Off (PTO). The use of PTO leave and/or an unpaid leave of absence applies to both exempt and non-exempt employees. If PTO leave is not available, staff will not be paid for the time away from work in accordance with the PTO Program Policy guidelines. (See Human Resources Policy # 1300.1, *Paid Time Off Program*.)

When the Liberal Leave Policy is invoked, staff who have been designated as “Essential Staff” by their Vice President or Academic Dean must report to and/or remain at work. All other *non-essential staff* are permitted to use the two-hour grace period. Non-essential staff, who do not report to work when Liberal Leave is invoked AND who have previously scheduled PTO or bereavement leave, are not eligible to use the two-hour grace period.

When the Liberal Leave Policy is invoked, the Vice President for Student Life will ensure student services are available for residential and off-campus students on the Troy campus.

Procedure From time-to-time, it may be deemed necessary to modify the operating schedule. Altered schedules have resulted from events such as weather emergencies, interruption of utilities and local conditions, or other emergencies. Altered schedules may, therefore, pertain to the Institute, a campus, a school or a department.

When conditions warrant, the President, in consultation with the Provost, Vice President for Administration and the Vice President for Human Resources, will decide whether and when to alter/curtail operations. It is recognized, however, that conditions may be local.

Announcement

When there is an alteration or curtailment of Rensselaer's operating schedule, an official announcement approved by the President or designee, will be made on the Public Safety Closing/Delay Information Line, through designated radio stations, through RenServ communication announcements, RPI Alert, or by the designated Vice President/portfolio owner. Since conditions may vary in the geographic areas where Rensselaer has campuses, there may be times when Liberal Leave Policy is invoked for some locations and not others. In addition, conditions may be different on campus than they are in the area where an employee lives. Although every effort will be made to ensure consistency across media, the official operating schedule will be the one reported on the Public Safety system.

Essential Staff

When the Liberal Leave Policy is invoked, all "Essential Staff" must report to work and/or remain at work.

Essential Staff is defined as an employee who has been designated by the Vice President or portfolio owner as vital to the operation of a work group, whose presence is required regardless of the existence of an emergency condition or Institute closing, and whose presence allows the continuation of critical services, protects the safety and well being of the university population and/or physical plant and supports necessary timely work. Designated Essential Staff must remain at work or report to work. Employees who fail to remain at or report to work may be considered on an Unauthorized Absence Without Approval pending discussion with their supervisor.

Annually, or on a rotating schedule, certain employees will be designated by their supervisors as Essential Staff. This designation should be put in writing indicating that these employees provide critical services and are required to report to work or remain at work. The Division of Human Resources can provide guidance on making the determination.

Essential Staff may also be designated by the Vice President or portfolio owner based on the business needs of the department at the time of the emergency condition or Institute closing. Each unit/department will define its own staffing requirements in times of an emergency or Institute closing. Essential Staff in this category will be advised at the time of the liberal leave announcement.

Compensation

When Rensselaer at Troy or Hartford, or a department of either (including offices in New York City, Washington D.C or other locations) invokes Liberal Leave due to inclement weather or an emergency, non-exempt, Essential Staff will be paid time and a half for all hours worked and will receive equal time off for time worked from the time their Liberal Leave is invoked on campus or at their work location to the end of their normally scheduled work shift. Such time off must be approved by the employee's immediate supervisor and must be taken within a reasonable period of time.

All staff not designated as "Essential Staff" arriving to work within a two hour period of time from the start of their shift or who leave work within two hours of the normal end time of their shift will be paid other paid time "OTH" for time taken within that two hour period of time. Staff electing not to report to work for the entire duration of their shift will utilize PTO leave or leave without pay for the entire shift.

Temporary and Fixed-term employees who are not eligible for PTO leave are paid for time worked only.