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SUMMARY:

This policy provides guidelines for the identification and use of Essential Personnel during campus emergencies. During a Suspension of Operations, Essential Personnel provide services that relate directly to the health, safety and welfare of the University, ensure continuity of key operations, and maintain and protect Coastal Carolina University (CCU) property.

POLICY:

I. In the event of extraordinary situations or emergency conditions, the University may suspend normal operations and classes in whole or in part. In such instances, all employees designated as Essential Personnel must fulfill their duties as set forth in this policy in order to:

A. ensure the continuation of critical University operations,

B. attend to the needs of students and ensure the safety and security of the University community and
C. protect the University’s assets.

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all CCU employees (excluding student employees and graduate assistants).

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Essential Personnel are defined as CCU employees who have been designated by Department Head(s)/Chair(s) to be critical to the continuation of the University’s essential and direct care services in the event of a Suspension of Operations.

B. Suspension of Operations is defined as the decision to suspend University operations in whole or in part, and may include classes and administrative offices operating on an abbreviated schedule, the cancellation of classes, the closure of administrative and staff offices, or the closure of campus, a single or group of buildings or residential facilities. During periods of closure, CCU will not operate as a designated shelter for employees and/or their families/pets.

C. Department Head/Chair is defined as the highest ranking administrator in a department, center or college/school within the University (e.g., dean, director, department chair).

D. Essential Services are defined as those services that are required to ensure the security, safety and critical operations of the University during emergency conditions. In the event of a Suspension of Operations, the President (or designee), in consultation with the Emergency Management Team, will determine which services are essential based on the nature of the event.

E. Direct Care Services are defined as those services that are required to ensure the physical and emotional well-being of resident students during emergency conditions. In the event of a Suspension of Operations, the President (or designee), in consultation with the Emergency Management Team, will determine which services are essential based on the nature of the event.

F. Operational Level is defined as the categorization of the situation giving rise to the Suspension of Operations in terms of the degree of severity, which in turn may affect the activation and work requirements of Essential Personnel. The operating levels and definitions can be found at Emergency Operating Levels.

G. Authorized Official is defined as the party responsible for making the decision to suspend University operations due to extraordinary situations or emergency conditions. The authorized official will be CCU’s President (or designee). In
certain instances (e.g., hazardous weather), Suspension of Operations or closure may be determined by the Governor of the State of South Carolina and/or the Horry County Government.

H. Non-exempt Employee is defined under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) as a CCU employee holding a position that is subject to the provisions of the FLSA.

I. Exempt Employee is defined as a CCU employee holding a position that is deemed exempt from the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and/or applicable state law.

II. POLICY ADMINISTRATION

A. Identification of Essential Personnel

1. Department Heads/Chairs are responsible for identifying the CCU employees to be designated as Essential Personnel for their respective area(s) of oversight. This determination is made on the basis of the maintaining and/or delivering of the essential and direct care services. Essential Personnel activated during a Suspension of Operations will vary depending upon the circumstances and the nature and severity of the event. Essential personnel will be notified of their activation by their supervisor or Department Head/Chair.

2. Department Heads/Chairs are responsible for notifying the Office of Human Resources and Equal Opportunity in writing of essential personnel for reporting purposes. Essential personnel will be reviewed by departments regularly.

3. Department Heads/Chairs are responsible for notifying the CCU employees who have been identified as Essential Personnel. The respective Department Head/Chair or supervisor should also review this policy with his/her designees.

4. Depending on the nature of the emergency, any CCU employee is subject to designation as Essential Personnel on a case-by-case basis.

B. Suspension of Operations and Emergency Operating Levels

1. Decisions regarding Suspension of Operations and Emergency Operating Level will be made by CCU’s President (or designee) in consultation with other University leadership and/or other authorized officials as appropriate, necessary and feasible.

2. Once it has been determined that Suspension of Operations is the appropriate course of action and the Emergency Operating Level has been selected, the Office of University Communication will provide official
notification to all those affected by the Suspension of Operations via an official University communication outlet.

C. Service Determinations During Suspension of Operations

The President (or designee), in coordination with the Emergency Management Team, will determine the Essential Services and Direct Care Services that will be maintained. IF EMPLOYEES ARE NOT DESIGNATED AS ESSENTIAL, THEY SHOULD NOT REPORT TO WORK.

D. Reporting for Duty during Suspension of Operations

1. Essential Personnel will be notified by the University announcements and/or their respective Department Heads/Chairs (or their designees) of their activation. They must report to work as scheduled or as soon as feasible. Essential Personnel must remain on duty as instructed in order to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of Essential and Direct Care Services, unless directed or permitted to do otherwise by their respective department administrators.

2. There may be some essential employees who can perform the required services from home or from a remote location if travel conditions are hazardous. Department Heads/Chairs will address these issues on a case-by-case basis.

E. Excuse from Required Duty during Suspension of Operations

1. At the discretion of the Department Head/Chair, Essential Personnel may be excused from service on a case-by-case basis. Notification to the Department Head/Chair should occur prior to the employee’s scheduled work starting time.

2. Possible reasons for excused absences include:
   a. childcare or eldercare issues,
   b. medical issues (self/immediate family member),
   c. damage to home,
   d. impassible roads,
   e. unsafe travel condition to report to work or
   f. other circumstances which may warrant an excused absence.

F. Compensation during Suspension of Operations

1. The following attendance and compensation policies will be in effect for employees required to provide service, report to or remain at work during the Suspension of Operations.
   a. Non-exempt employees who are required to provide a service, report to work or remain at work during the Suspension of
Operations will be paid their regular rates. Hours worked over forty (40) in a specified workweek will be compensated at 1.5 times the employees’ regular rates. Depending on the nature of the emergency, any additional compensation considerations will be communicated to CCU’s Office of Human Resources by the Division of State Human Resources (DSHR).

b. Exempt employees who provide a service, report to or remain at work as required during the Suspension of Operations will be paid their regular salaries. Depending on the nature of the emergency, any additional compensation considerations will be communicated to CCU’s Office of Human Resources by the Division of State Human Resources (DSHR). An exempt employee may be eligible for compensatory time for hours worked in excess of the employee’s normal work schedule. Refer to FAST-HREO-216.

c. Designated Essential Personnel who do not report to work during Suspension of Operations may be required to use any accrued leave, as appropriate, for such time away from work. Temporary staff and student employees who are deemed essential and do not report for duty are not eligible for compensation or paid leave time.

2. Employees whose respective work units are subject to Suspension of Operations and who are not designated as Essential Personnel or otherwise required to work may be compelled to use any accrued leave or compensatory time, and/or to make up work time missed. Employees may be required to deliver make-up services, including teaching, to ensure the students receive the necessary credit/contact hours. Authorized leave with pay may only be granted in certain circumstances as approved by the Governor (or designee). Such information, as well as administrative guidance, will be communicated to CCU’s Office of Human Resources by the Division of State Human Resources (DSHR) following a specific emergency event.

G. Non-Compliance during Suspension of Operations

At the discretion of CCU, employees may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge, for any of the following reasons:
1. refusing to report to work,
2. failing to follow a reasonable and appropriate directive given by a CCU Public Safety Official,
3. engaging in unsafe practices, including being on campus without authorization, and/or
4. for other reasons as deemed appropriate.

IV. OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

A. FAST-HREO 216 Minimum Wage and Overtime Compensation
B.  FAST-HREO 222 Disciplinary Action and Termination for Cause

C.  Current Faculty Manual