



Inclement Weather

POLICY STATEMENT

Cornell University may change its operating status during and surrounding periods of inclement weather. At such times, the university has a prescribed method for evaluation and communication of these changes to university staff, faculty, and students. Academic and administrative units are expected to abide by any decision made by central administration regarding operating status.

REASON FOR POLICY

The university wishes to protect the safety of its community members, research, and facilities and in periods of inclement weather. Toward that end, the university is committed to operational consistency and efficiency when a change in operating status is warranted.

ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

- Ithaca-based campuses and Tompkins County and Geneva locations

WHO SHOULD READ THIS POLICY

- All members of the Cornell University Ithaca and Geneva campus communities

WEBSITE ADDRESS FOR THIS POLICY

- This policy: www.dfa.cornell.edu/treasurer/policyoffice/policies/volumes/riskandsafety/inclementweather.cfm
- University Policy Office: www.policy.cornell.edu

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Volume: 8, Risk Management
and Public Safety
Responsible Executive: Vice
President for Facilities Services
Responsible Office: Emergency
Planning and Recovery
Originally Issued: December
1997
Updated: January 25, 2012

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RELATED RESOURCES

University Policies and Documentation

[University Policy 6.9, Time Away from Work \(Excluding Academic and Bargaining Unit Staff\)](#)

[University Policy 6.13, Disability Accommodation Process for Faculty and Staff](#)

[University Policy 8.3, Emergency Planning](#)

[Inclement Weather Procedures for Students with Disabilities](#)

University Forms and Systems

[Cornell Operating Status](#)

[Cornell Special Conditions Information](#)

[Employee Essentials](#)

[Student Center](#)

[Voluntary Inclement Weather Questionnaire for Faculty and Staff](#)

[Voluntary Inclement Weather Questionnaire for Students](#)

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CONTACTS

Please direct general questions about University Policy 8.2, Inclement Weather, to your unit's administration. If you have questions about specific issues, call the following offices:

Subject	Contact	Telephone	E-mail/Web Address
Policy Clarification	Vice President for Facilities Services	(607) 255-4394	www.fs.cornell.edu/vp/
Area Bus Service (Recorded Information)	Chemung/Schuyler County Transit	(607) 254-6791	www.transportation.cornell.edu/tms/parking/commuting/busservices/
	Cortland Public Transit	(607) 254-6792	
	Tioga County Public Transit	(607) 254-6793	
	Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT)	(607) 254-6790	www.tcatbus.com
Area Bus Service (Schedules)	Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT)	(607) 277-7433 (277-RIDE)	www.tcatbus.com
Area Bus Service (Other Questions)	Chemung/Schuyler County Transit	(607) 734-5212	www.transportation.cornell.edu/tms/parking/commuting/busservices/
	Cortland Public Transit	(607) 758-3383	
	Tioga County Public Transit	(607) 699-3424	
	Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT)	(607) 277-9388, ext. 300	www.tcatbus.com
Designation of Essential Personnel	Appropriate Department or Unit Head	Unit-specific	
Disability Accommodation for Faculty and Staff Members	Medical Leaves Administration	(607) 255-1177	benefits@cornell.edu hr.cornell.edu/policies/all/disability_accommodation_faqs.html
Disability Accommodation for Students	Student Disability Services	(607) 254-4545	sds_cu@cornell.edu sds.cornell.edu/other_accommodations/transportation.html
Emergency	Cornell University Police Department (CUPD)	911	
Inclement Weather Program for Individuals with Disabilities	Office of Workforce Policy and Labor Relations	(607) 254-7232	equalopportunity@cornell.edu www.cornell.edu/disability/inclement-weather.cfm
Operating Status of the University	Inclement Weather Phone	(607) 255-3377	www.cornell.edu/about/status/
Parking Vehicles on Campus	Commuter and Parking Services	(607) 255-4600	www.transportation.cornell.edu/tms/parking/

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DEFINITIONS

These definitions apply to terms as they are used in this policy.

Delayed Opening	A university operating status based upon the weather or other emergency that delays or changes the schedules of certain administrative and academic units in Tompkins County.
Designated Weather Watcher (DWW)	An individual appointed by the Vice President for Facilities Services who, during periods of potential or actual inclement weather, assists in the monitoring and assessment of weather conditions, notification of key personnel, and consultation with appropriate parties.
Essential Employee	An individual needed on campus to meet the needs of students, research programs, or general operations when the university and/or the local roads are closed. This includes, but is not limited to, individuals providing critical dining or health services, those needed to tend critical research experiments needing regular attention, those tending to the needs of research animals, or those in critical physical plant or safety operations.
Full Closing	A university operating status based upon the weather or other emergency that closes all university offices and departments, except selected emergency and essential services.
Inclement Weather	Expected or actual weather conditions that are severe enough to affect university vehicular traffic and/or university schedules.
Partial Closing	A university operating status based upon the weather or other emergency that closes most administrative offices, but allows academic units to operate on a normal schedule.
Road Advisory	A travel advisory issued by the Tompkins County Sheriff. When a road advisory is issued, the university will remain open, and units are expected to remain open.
Road Closure	The official closure of all roads in Tompkins County, issued by the Tompkins County Sheriff. In the event of a Tompkins County road closure, the university will close.

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RESPONSIBILITIES

The major responsibilities each party has in connection with the University Policy 8.2, Inclement Weather, are as follows:

Cornell University Police Department (CUPD)	Consult with appropriate members of the university and surrounding law enforcement agencies. Report conclusions to the Vice President for Facilities Services.
Department Chair or Unit Head	<p>Within your unit, maintain the same operating status that has been declared by the university.</p> <p>When a change in operating status has been declared, maintain a schedule within your unit that is consistent with this policy.</p> <p>Designate essential employees on an annual basis (see the “<i>Essential Employees</i>” segment of this document).</p> <p>Develop adequate internal procedures for compliance to this policy.</p>
Designated Weather Watcher (DWW)	<p>Remain aware of weather conditions on behalf of the university.</p> <p>Heighten weather-monitoring activities to remain cognizant of the threat to the university and surrounding area if and when weather becomes potentially hazardous.</p> <p>Notify the Vice President for Facilities Services of any potential inclement weather situations.</p> <p>Notify the Vice President for Facilities Services and the pre-established inclement weather planning group if and when it becomes apparent that hazardous weather is imminent.</p> <p>Work with the Cornell University Police Department (CUPD) and University Communications to issue weather advisories/warnings and changes in operating status of the university.</p> <p>Initiate local warning actions when there is an immediate weather threat.</p>
Director of Building Care	Consult with the Vice President for Facilities Services when a decision regarding operating status is being made.
Director of Emergency Planning and Recovery	Consult with Vice President for Facilities Services and Designated Weather Watcher (DWW) during weather watch, and when a decision regarding operating status is being made.
Director of Environmental Health and Safety	Consult with the CUPD and the Vice President for Facilities Services when a decision regarding operating status is being made.
Director of Grounds	Consult with the CUPD and the Vice President for Facilities Services when a decision regarding operating status is being made.
Director of Press Relations Office	Follow notification procedures consistent with this policy (see the “ <i>Notification Procedures</i> ” segment of this policy).
Senior Director of Facilities Operations	Follow notification procedures consistent with this policy (see the “ <i>Notification Procedures</i> ” segment of this policy). This includes the Tompkins County and out-of-county transportation service providers.
Supervisor	Be reasonably understanding and flexible regarding staff members’ needs during periods of inclement weather, especially if a long commute to and from work is involved.
Vice President for Facilities Services	Make a final decision regarding the operating status of the university.

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RESPONSIBILITIES, continued

Vice President for Human Resources and Safety Services	Follow notification procedures consistent with this policy (see the <i>"Notification Procedures"</i> segment of this policy).
Vice President for Student and Academic Services	Follow notification procedures consistent with this policy (see the <i>"Notification Procedures"</i> segment of this policy).

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PRINCIPLES

Overview

During inclement weather, the Vice President for Facilities Services will make a decision regarding the operating status of the university. This decision will be based on information received from the Designated Weather Watcher (DWW); forecasts from a number of meteorological services; reports on local and campus road conditions from the Cornell University Police Department (CUPD), Grounds Care, Facilities Operations, and the Tompkins County Sheriff's Department; and advice from senior executive staff and the deans.

◆ **Caution:** A decision of central administration as to when the university will close will govern all units of the university located in Tompkins County. Individual colleges and departments may not override a decision of central administration to close the university (i.e., departments and units may not stay open if central administration has declared that the university is closed; similarly, units may not declare themselves closed unless the university is closed).

This policy describes university procedures for implementing a change in operating status (see the "Procedures" section of this policy); provides information on university schedules during a change in operating status (see the "Change In Operating Status" segment of this policy); and outlines standard notification procedures for administrators to follow in such instances (see the "Notification Procedures" segment of this policy).

◆ **Notes:**

- Procedures for the Geneva Experiment Station may differ from those of Tompkins County locations. See the "Geneva Experiment Station" segment of this policy for more information.
- Procedures for colleges or units outside of Tompkins County may differ from those of Tompkins County locations. See the "Other Locations Outside of Tompkins County" segment of this policy for more information.

Faculty, Staff Member, and Student Needs

Supervisors should be reasonably understanding and flexible regarding a staff member's individual needs during inclement weather, especially if the employee has a long commute to and from work. A faculty or staff member who believes that it is unsafe to travel, or who is faced with unexpected family care responsibilities (such as those created by local school closings), should use his or her judgment and remain at home if that is the most prudent action (for information on how to record time taken off during inclement weather, see the "Compensation" segment of this policy).

Cornell has a voluntary program for faculty and staff with short- or long-term mobility impairments who have difficulty getting to or around their worksite during inclement weather. To see if the program meets your needs, please visit the Disability

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PRINCIPLES, continued

Information website at www.cornell.edu/disability/inclement-weather.cfm and complete the *Voluntary Inclement Weather Questionnaire* (www.cornell.edu/disability/docs/inclement-weather-questionnaire.pdf) or obtain a printed copy from the Office of Workforce Policy and Labor Relations (WPLR) at (607) 254-7232 or equalopportunity@cornell.edu.

WPLR will collect the information and work with the ADA Coordinator for Facilities to assess the staff member's parking or transit information, work location, arrival and departure times, other buildings frequented in the workday, and challenges experienced due to inclement weather. In addition to this campus-wide coordination, staff members are encouraged to work with their supervisors and building coordinators to relay their specific needs.

For students with disabilities, inclement weather procedures and transportation accommodation information is available on the Student Disability Services website at sds.cornell.edu/campus_access.html. Students who need accommodation can complete a *Voluntary Inclement Weather Questionnaire* (sds.cornell.edu/Forms/Voluntary_Inclement_Weather_Questionnaire.pdf) and submit it to Student Disability Services at sds_cu@cornell.edu.

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PROCEDURES

Essential Employees

Essential employees are those needed on campus to meet the needs of students, research programs, or general operations when the university and/or the local roads are closed. These employees work primarily in areas that have been pre-identified as essential service functions in unit emergency plans, and they have specialized training required to do the work, and/or they have assignments directly related to critical research. This includes, but is not limited to, individuals providing critical dining or health services, those needed to tend critical research experiments needing regular attention, those tending to the needs of research animals, or those in critical physical plant or safety operations.

If you are a manager in an area where essential employees must report to or remain at work even when the university is closed, you must do the following prior to winter weather:

- Ensure that the applicable job description(s) clearly state this requirement.
- Ensure that these staff members are identified as essential employees in your unit emergency plans, and that they are aware of their status.
- Ensure that each essential employee is issued a "critical operations" Essential Service Designation Card, which gives permission to travel on closed roads. These cards will be generated every August from the information submitted by units in their emergency plans. The process for producing the cards each year will be managed by the Office of Emergency Planning and Recovery and the Division of Human Resources.
- Verify that each essential employee who will be needed to report to work during a university and/or road closure understands the timing of his or her shift and has an opportunity to discuss any issues or concerns.

Travel to and from Work

If a county or municipality announces that you should "avoid unnecessary travel" but no special operating status has been announced, employees are expected to report to work as usual (travel to and from work is considered necessary travel).

Occasionally, a county or municipality announces that the roads are closed. Essential employees who attempt to come to work when the roads are closed are encouraged to carry their Essential Service Designation Card to be available to any law enforcement officer.

How to Learn About a Change in Operating Status

Once a decision has been made to change the operating status of the university, the details will be disseminated as widely as possible through telephone trees, e-mail, and the local media. The expected reopening time and/or date will be available with the closing information through these channels, whenever possible.

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PROCEDURES, continued

A notice of any change in university operating status will be distributed automatically to all faculty, staff members, and students with an active Cornell NetID through a mass electronic mailing. In addition, any of the options below may be used to learn of the current or expected operating status of the university. For information on how the decision of a change in operating status is communicated, see the “Responsibilities” section of this document.

Option A—Online

Employees may access information on the operating status of the university at the following webpages:

- www.cornell.edu/about/status/
- www.cornell.edu/cuinfo/specialconditions/

Option B—Radio or television

Whenever possible, announcements of a decision regarding the university’s operating status will be broadcast over local and regional radio and television stations, beginning at 5:00 a.m. (see the table below).

◆ **Note:** The media generally do not carry announcements of openings; they broadcast closings and delays only. If there is no announcement concerning Cornell, assume that the university will be open and operating as usual.

Table 1
Radio and television stations broadcasting changes in university operating status

Ithaca	WHCU 870 AM	WPIE 1160 AM	WNYY 1470 AM	WICB 91.7 FM	WVBR 93.5 FM
	WYXL 97.3 FM	WQNY 103.7 FM			
Binghamton	WKOP 680 AM	WNBF 1290 AM	WSQX 89.3 FM	WSKG 90.9 FM	WHWK 98.1 FM
	WAAL 99.1 FM	WYOS 104 FM			
Cortland	WKRT 920 AM	WIII 99.9 FM			
Dundee	WFLR 1570 AM	WFLR 95.9 FM			
Elmira/ Watkins Glen/ Montour Falls	WWLZ 820 AM	WENY 1230 AM	WGMF 1490 AM	WENY 92.7 FM	WPGI 100.9 FM
	WNGZ 104.9 FM	WNKI 106.1 FM			
Owego	WEBO 1330 AM	WLTB 101.7 FM			
Syracuse - AM	WSYR 570	WHEN 620	WFBL 1050		
Syracuse- FM	WSEN 92.1	WYYY 94	WBBS 104.7	WHCD 106.9	WWHT 107.9
Television	News Center 7	IC TV 16	WBNG 12	WENY 36	WICZ 40
	WIVT 34	WIXT 9	WTVH 5	WSTM 3	WSYT 68

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PROCEDURES, continued

Option C – Telephone

Call the Inclement Weather Phone at 255-3377 to find out the present or predicted operating status of the university. This is particularly useful to those regularly scheduled to start work before 5:00 a.m.

Option D – Emergency Mass Notification via Text or Voice Message

Faculty, staff members, and students can receive emergency notifications via text message on their mobile phones or by voice message on any phone. To subscribe to the Emergency Mass Notification list:

- **Faculty and staff members:** Go to the Personal tab in the grey navigation bar in Employee Essentials at ee.ohr.cornell.edu. Select the link for EMN Phone Number and follow the instructions.
- **Students:** Go to Student Center at www.studentcenter.cornell.edu, select the link for Emergency Mass Notification, and follow the instructions.

Decision to Make a Change in Operating Status

If a change in operating status is warranted, the Vice President for Facilities Services has three options: a delayed opening, a partial closing, or a full closing.

The table that follows shows university schedules associated with decisions to change the operating status of the university.

Table 2
University schedules during inclement weather

	Delayed Opening	Partial Closing	Full Closing
Athletic Events	Report to work at the announced opening time.	Regular schedule	Canceled
Bus Service	Regular schedule, weather permitting. If the roads are closed by the Tompkins County Sheriff's Department, schedules may be reduced.	Regular schedule, weather permitting. If the roads are closed by the Tompkins County Sheriff's Department, schedules may be reduced.	Regular schedule, weather permitting. If the roads are closed by the Tompkins County Sheriff's Department, schedules may be reduced.
Campus Life	Selected emergency and essential services operate on a normal schedule. All others report to work at the announced opening time.	Regular schedule	Selected emergency and essential services operate on a normal schedule.
Classes and Office Hours	Begin at the announced opening time.	Regular schedule	Canceled
Cornell Information and Referral Center	Report to work at the announced opening time.	Regular schedule	Selected emergency and essential services operate on a normal schedule.
Cornell University Police Department (CUPD)	Regular schedule	Regular schedule	Selected emergency and essential services operate on a normal schedule.

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PROCEDURES, continued

	Delayed Opening	Partial Closing	Full Closing
Environmental Health and Safety	Report to work at the announced opening time.	Regular schedule	Selected emergency and essential services operate on a normal schedule.
Essential Personnel	Regular schedule	Regular Schedule	Regular Schedule
Examinations	Begin at the announced opening time.	Regular schedule	Canceled
Facilities Services	Report to work at the announced opening time.	Selected emergency and essential services operate on a normal schedule	Selected emergency and essential services operate on a normal schedule.
Gannett Health Services	Report to work at the announced opening time.	Regular schedule	Selected urgent and essential services operate on a normal schedule.
Libraries	Open at the announced opening time.	Regular schedule, reduced services	Closed
Vehicles, Parking on Central Campus	Staff members wishing to park on campus are encouraged to park in the parking garage or at other designated "overnight winter parking areas."	Staff members wishing to park on campus are encouraged to park in the parking garage or at other designated "overnight winter parking areas."	Staff members wishing to park on campus are encouraged to park in the parking garage or at other designated "overnight winter parking areas."
All Other Administrative Offices	Report to work at the announced opening time.	Closed	Closed

Campus Travel and Parking

Essential personnel who arrive at central campus before the scheduled opening time, or when the university is closed, should park in the parking garage or at other designated "overnight winter parking areas."

Compensation

In the event of a delayed opening, partial closing, or closing, regular full-time and part-time employees who are not required to report to or remain at work will be paid at their regular rate for regularly scheduled hours while the university is closed.

Nonexempt employees should record this time as "leave with pay."

Regular full-time or part-time nonexempt employees who are required to work during a delayed opening, partial closing, or full closing will receive pay at time and one-half their normal rate for hours actually worked, plus compensatory time off equal to the hours worked during this closing. Alternatively, upon mutual agreement between the employee and the supervisor, the nonexempt employee may receive straight pay for the day, plus compensatory time off equal to one and one-half times the number of hours actually worked during this closing. All compensatory time must be taken during the fiscal year in which it is earned. Departments are responsible for maintaining compensatory time records for employees who work under these inclement weather conditions.

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PROCEDURES, continued

Compensation during inclement weather for employees who are covered by collective bargaining agreement is subject to the provisions of their contracts.

Employees who cannot report to or cannot remain at work due to personal travel conditions when the university is open may charge the time off to personal leave or vacation; make up the time within the same workweek at the mutual convenience of the employee and the supervisor; or request leave without pay.

Those employees on an approved scheduled vacation or on sick leave will be charged leave time regardless of the weather or the operating status of the university.

Geneva Experiment Station

The Geneva Experiment Station has only one emergency mode of operation during inclement weather: cancellation of all functions except those essential to safety and basic physical plant operation. The latter functions, covering seven days and three shifts, have special guidelines.

The director or his designee has the responsibility to make the decision to declare the emergency mode. The decision at Geneva is made independent of any emergency mode decisions affecting the Cornell campus at Ithaca. If the city or county announces that motorists are prohibited from driving on all or some of the roads, we do not expect employees to violate those rules. However, some essential personnel will be needed on the job. Essential personnel are designated by their supervisors based on certain criteria, and are issued Essential Service Designation Cards identifying their essential service function.

Whenever possible, announcement of decisions on inclement weather conditions will be made by 6:30 a.m. of the day affected, through the director's office.

The following radio stations have agreed to cooperate with the university in announcements of the inclement weather emergency:

CALL LETTERS	DIAL SETTING	CITY
WCGR (AM)	1550	CANANDAIGUA
WGVA (AM)	1240	GENEVA
WNYR (FM)	98.5	GENEVA
WACK (AM)	1420	NEWARK
WFLR (AM)	1570	PENN YAN
WHAM (AM)	1180	ROCHESTER
WSFW (AM)	1110	SENECA FALLS
WHCU (AM)	870	ITHACA

In the event that a weather emergency is called during the day, notification will be made through departmental offices.

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PROCEDURES, continued

On any day in which the Geneva Experiment Station is operating in the emergency mode of operation during inclement weather, those employees normally scheduled to work will be compensated as if they had worked. Employees on vacation and sick leave, or on a regularly scheduled day off, will not be additionally compensated for an inclement weather day.

Those regular full-time or part-time overtime pay eligible essential employees who are required to work will receive pay at time and one-half their normal rate for hours actually worked during the closing (delayed, partial, full), plus compensatory time off, equal to the employee's hours worked during the closing (delayed, partial, full). As an alternative, upon mutual agreement between the employee and supervisor, the overtime pay eligible employee may receive straight pay for the day, plus compensatory time off equal to one and one-half times the number of hours actually worked during the closing (delayed, partial, full). All compensatory time must be taken within the fiscal year (July 1-June 30) in which it is earned. These days should be recorded as leave with pay. Departments are responsible for maintaining compensatory time records for overtime pay eligible employees who work under these inclement weather conditions.

Other Locations Outside of Tompkins County

The division vice president, dean, or his or her designee is responsible to make the decision on operating status. The decision is made independent of any emergency mode decisions affecting the Cornell campus at Ithaca. If the city or county where the department or unit is located announces that motorists are prohibited from driving on all or some of the roads, employees are not expected to violate those rules. However, some essential personnel will be needed on the job. Essential personnel are designated by their supervisors based on certain criteria, and are issued cards identifying their essential service function.

Notification Procedures

The following table shows the notification duties if there is any change in university operating status surrounding a period of inclement weather. Notification of a decision to close or delay will be communicated to the campus community as quickly as possible. If the decision is made during working hours, e-mail and telephone trees will be used. Under all circumstances, notification will be sent to local radio and television stations, and an e-mail notification will be sent automatically to all faculty, staff members, and students.

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PROCEDURES, continued

Table 3

Notification duties for decisions regarding operating status of the university

Party	Must Notify	Comment
President/Provost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All deans • All vice presidents (except those noted below) 	
Vice President for Facilities Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President, Provost • Vice President for University Communications (who, in turn, notifies the Director of Press Relations Office) • Vice President for Student and Academic Services • Vice President for Human Resources and Safety Services • Assistant Vice President for Risk Management and Public Safety (who, in turn, notifies the Director of Environmental Health and Safety) • Chief of the Police, CUPD • Director of Emergency Planning and Recovery • Director of Building Care • Director of Grounds • Senior Director of Facilities Operations 	
Director of Press Relations Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local media • Director of Cornell Information and Referral Center • Director of Government and Community Relations 	As necessary
Vice President for Student and Academic Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Athletics • Director of Gannett Health Services • Assistant Vice President for Student and Academic Services • Director of Cornell Dining • Other staff members, as appropriate 	As necessary
Senior Director of Facilities Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tompkins County and out-of-county transportation service providers • Other staff members, as appropriate 	
Other Unit Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members, as appropriate 	

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