# LAMAR UNIVERSITY
# MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**SECTION: Human Resources** **MAPP 02.05.12**
**AREA: Employee Relations**

## SUBJECT: Employee Telecommuting – Emergency Events

### I. POLICY

A. Lamar University (LU) permits employees to work by telecommuting when, at the sole discretion of the University, this work arrangement will support the University's continued operations before, during, or after an emergency event.

### II. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

A. The goal of this policy is to support, as much as possible, uninterrupted operations so that an emergency event's impact on the University can be minimized.

B. This policy falls under the authority of the Texas Education Code, § 51.159 and § 51.231, the Texas Government Code, § 658.010 and § 659.018, and the Texas State University System (TSUS) Rules and Regulations, Chapter IV.2 and IV.4, and Chapter V.

C. This document states the policies and procedures under which LU employees may telecommute before, during, or after emergency events.

D. This policy applies to benefits-eligible staff employees of Lamar University. The policy does not apply to faculty positions or positions that require student status as a condition of employment.

E. This policy does not apply to staff members designated as Essential Personnel, whose presence on campus may be required during emergencies.

F. Telecommuting may not be an option for all employees. Employees whose regular job duties require their physical presence on campus may not be able to telecommute while employees whose job duties can be performed at a distance may be able to telecommute.

### III. AUTHORITY TO APPROVE TELECOMMUTING

A. The University President or President's Designee has the authority to declare a Suspension of Operations for the University.

B. Once a Suspension of Operations has been declared, the President or President's Designee may authorize work by telecommuting. Depending on the emergency, the President or President's

Designee may authorize telecommuting for specific employees or specific units affected by the emergency.

## IV. DEFINITIONS

A. **Campus.** All buildings and facilities under the control of the University, regardless of whether these are located on the main LU campus or elsewhere.

B. **Emergency Event.** An event that may cause the President or Designee to declare a Suspension of Operations. Emergency events include, but are not limited to, natural disasters (e.g., hurricane, flooding); national, state, or local emergencies; localized damage to a University facility (e.g., chemical spill, fire, flooding); terrorist attacks; pandemics; or other events that make it dangerous or impossible for an employee to travel to or be on the LU campus.

C. **Essential Personnel.** Staff members designated by Unit Heads/Department Heads, the Executive Operations Team (EOT) and/or the Emergency Management Team (EMT) to be critical to the continuation of key operations and services in the event of 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 University property. Essential Personnel may be classified as a member of the Ride-Out Team and/or a member of the Recovery Team. Essential Personnel include employees needed for the short period of time until access to campus is expected to be restored. The Essential Personnel activated during a Suspension of Operations may vary depending on the circumstances and nature and severity of the event.

D. **President's Designee.** Also known as **Designee**. LU employee designated beforehand to serve as the "President's Designee" should the LU President not be available or able to perform his/her duties. In these situations, the President's Designee has the authority to make decisions on the President's behalf. These decisions may cover all University operations or may be restricted to a defined subset of the President's duties.

E. **Regularly Assigned Place of Employment.** Location on the University campus, including off-site University facilities, where an employee usually and customarily reports for work. The regularly assigned place of employment is considered an employee's workstation for all pay, leave, and travel purposes.

F. **Suspension of Operations.** The decision of the President or President's Designee to suspend University operations in whole or in part and may include University closure and/or class cancellation.

G. **Telecommuting.** Also known as **Remote Work** or **Telework**. To work one or more days per week at a location other than an employee's regularly assigned place of employment.

## V. PROCEDURES

A. Before, during, or after an emergency event, the President or President's Designee may declare a Suspension of Operations.

B. Once a Suspension of Operations has been declared, the President or President's Designee may authorize specific employees or specific units to telecommute.

> **Note.** The President or President's Designee will consider the feasibility of telecommuting when making a decision. Massive and widespread flooding, evacuations, power outages, industrial accidents, and similar catastrophic events may make it impossible or, at times, dangerous to work, even at a distance. In these cases, the President or Designee may decide that telecommuting is not a feasible option for any LU employees.

C. If an emergency affects all or most of the LU campus, the authorization to telecommute may apply to a range of University employees or units. If an event is localized (i.e., a specific unit, area of campus), the authorization may apply only to employees or units affected by the event.

D. The authorization to telecommute does not apply to Essential Personnel, who work to ensure that critical campus operations remain uninterrupted during an emergency event.

E. The President or President's Designee announces the authorization to telecommute through the University's channels of emergency communication, including, but not limited to, LU email, LU website, social media, and internal emergency contact lists.

F. Once the President or President's Designee has authorized emergency telecommuting, a supervisor or other authority cannot require an employee who is not Essential Personnel to remain on campus or travel to campus to work.

G. Non-Essential Personnel will not be allowed on campus until the campus is declared open by the President or President's Designee. Unauthorized persons may be ejected or charged with criminal trespassing while the campus is closed.

H. The President or President's Designee decides when the authorization to telecommute ends. No set timeline exists for this decision. To determine when to end remote work, the President or President's Designee considers factors such as the health, safety, and well being of LU employees and the severity of any damage to the campus or surrounding communities.

I. The President or President's Designee announces the end of telecommuting through channels of communication that include, but are not limited to, LU email, LU website, social media, and internal emergency contact lists.

J. Once the President or President's Designee has declared the campus open, employees are expected to return to their regularly assigned place of employment on the LU campus. If an employee's regularly assigned workstation is not available, an alternate workstation may be provided.

K. Telecommuting may remain an option for employees for whom returning to campus is not possible. In these situations, arrangements may be made to continue remote work until the employee can return. The President and President's Designee are the only people who can authorize continued telecommuting.

## VI. REFERENCES

Lamar University, Hurricane Preparedness Manual, June 2019

Texas Education Code, § 51.159 and § 51.231

Texas Government Code, § 658.010 and § 659.018

Texas State University System (TSUS) Rules and Regulations, Chapter IV.2 & IV.4, and Chapter V

## VII. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Party: Associate Vice President for Human Resources

Vice President for Finance and Operations

Review: Every three years on or before May 1

## VIII. APPROVAL

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|---|---|
| Jeremy C. Alltop | 02/28/2020 |
| Vice President for Finance and Operations | Date |

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|---|---|
| Kenneth R. Evans | 02/29/2020 |
| President | Date |

**REVISION LOG**

| Revision Number | Date | Description of Changes |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 02/29/2020 | Initial version approved by President. |