

ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS

PURPOSE

Protocols for actions to be taken by sleep center personnel during external emergencies and disasters (such as fire, flood, tornado, or hurricane) will ensure the safety of patients and staff.

POLICY

All sleep center personnel will follow approved procedures in the event of external emergencies.

Horizontal and/or vertical evacuation of patients and staff required because of weather or other environmental emergency in any UTMB facility shall follow posted evacuation plans in each unit or department.

PROCEDURE

1.0 Staffing During Adverse Conditions/ Disaster: Hurricanes

- 1.1 As per the UTMB Emergency Preparedness Plan, Ancillary Services will be on emergency staffing. Requests for tests should be limited to those that are medically necessary for care of patients during the emergency status.
- 1.2 UTMB Health Outpatient Clinics and Facilities in the coastal region will generally not remain open during adverse conditions (i.e. hurricane). Each outpatient clinic or facility should initiate their pre-determined Departmental Plans and any pre-storm checklists should be followed to ensure that facilities assets are protected. Staff members may not leave their duty station until released by their manager, and they must keep their emergency contact information up-to-date and remain in contact so that they can be called back to duty if needed or if the storm makes landfall in another location. If communications are lost with the Incident Command on the main campus, UTMB Health leadership is authorized to establish an Incident Command, if needed, in order to expedite recovery operations and return to normal operations as soon as possible.

2.0 Emergency Classifications

- 2.1 To aid in the speed and efficiency of the institution to deal with adverse conditions, all benefit eligible UTMB employees will be designated as essential or non-essential personnel. This is necessary because many institutional services, including UTMB hospitals, UTMB Emergency Department, Business Operations and Facilities, and Security may require 24-hour staffing even during adverse conditions when it may become necessary to officially suspend routine operations and move to emergency status. Under these circumstances, all essential employees are expected to report to, and/or remain at work to sustain services, and/or to protect the institution's assets.

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Employees may be asked to perform duties outside their normal job responsibilities if conditions warrant.

2.2 ESSENTIAL (“E”): employees with specific responsibilities before, during or after a declared emergency. All employees can be classified essential depending on the needs of the University. These responsibilities may include but are not limited to the following:

- Remain at worksite during the emergency
- Accompany patients to another location and provide care at that location until notified to return to UTMB Galveston
- Return immediately after the emergency to relieve those who were assigned to stay
- Work at an alternate location if assigned during or after the emergency
- Come to work during scheduled time off if requested

2.3 NON-ESSENTIAL (“N”): employees whose presence is not essential during a declared emergency status, but who cannot leave until released by supervisor and must return to work as conditions permit. Non-benefit eligible employees should be classified as non-essential and will not be eligible for Emergency Leave.

3.0 Disaster/Weather Emergencies Communication

3.1 In the event of a disaster or emergency weather conditions, please refer to the following lines of communication for more information:

- Call the UTMB hotline at **(409) 77-ALERT (772-5378)** or toll free at **(888) 772-5449**
- Call the UTMB ADC operator at **(979) 849-7721**
- Information is also available via the web at <http://www.utmb.edu/alert>. Should the UTMB web server go down, a second server is in place as a backup and will be available via UTMB's normal URL: <http://www.utmb.edu>. Additionally, an informational site will be activated at <http://utmbinfo.com>.
- Monitor local television and radio stations including KPRC/950 AM, KTRH/740 AM and KIKK/96 FM in Houston.

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4.0 Returning to Work

4.1 The specified time for UTMB employees to resume their regular work schedules will be communicated throughout the state through designated radio and TV stations. Call-in numbers through which to obtain this information will also be provided. It is the employee's responsibility to monitor the media for these announcements.

1.1 Regular work schedules can only be resumed when a general "All Clear" message is announced by the IEPO or designee.