Brigham and Women’s Hospital
Human Resources Policies and Procedures

SUBJECT: SEVERE WEATHER, EMERGENCY OR SIGNIFICANT EVENT
POLICY #: HR-406

Effective Date: January 1, 2008
Revised Date: December 24, 2012; April 5, 2013

POLICY
Brigham and Women’s Hospital is committed to providing patient care and all related patient care support services twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. It is the policy of the Hospital to remain open during extreme weather conditions, emergencies and other significant events. Employees are expected to work as scheduled, or if circumstances warrant, to extend work hours to meet operational needs. A Hospital State of Emergency/Disaster may be declared due to an Internal or External Disaster or Severe Weather Condition as defined by the Hospital’s Emergency Preparedness Plan. (http://www.bwhpikenotes.org/policies/CrisisResourceManual). This policy applies to employees who are subject to a collective bargaining agreement unless the policy conflicts with specific provisions in their collective bargaining agreement.

Circumstances covered by this policy include, but are not limited to:
- significant predicted or actual snowfall, icing, rain or flooding;
- events that result in a safety hazard at or near a worksite (such as a gas leak);
- events that result in power failures at or near a worksite;
- events that impede access to a worksite (such as a roadway or building closure).

EXCEPTIONS
It is unusual for the Hospital to declare a State of Emergency / Disaster and subsequently order a widespread closure of facilities or departments, regardless of a declaration by the Governor or City of Boston. In accordance with the established Hospital Emergency/Disaster plan, the President or designee is responsible for making the decision about widespread closure(s) and for initiating emergency communication plans and procedures.

The Hospital acknowledges that severe weather or other major disruptive events may require that individual practice sites and/or administrative /clinical departments, that do not have 24/7 patient care responsibilities, may need to close operations. During these circumstances, the BWH COO and BWPO President will be responsible for making “Site/ Department” closure decisions. Site* leadership, in conjunction with Senior Leadership*, may decide to delay opening, close early, reduce staffing levels, supplement staffing levels or reassign staff as necessary to address safety issues and/or support patient care.
Senior Leadership in conjunction with Site Leadership or Clinical Area Leadership are responsible for making the decision to close site(s) or clinical area(s) and for communicating the decision to employees.

*For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

**Senior Leadership:** BWH COO, BWPO CEO in conjunction with respective clinical Vice President  
**Clinical Area Leadership:** Medical Director and Director Level or above  
**Site:** Any Ambulatory satellite (e.g. 850 Boylston, 221 Longwood, Foxborough, etc.)

**SITE/DEPARTMENT GUIDELINES**
Site/Department Leadership is responsible for identifying staffing needed to maintain safe and viable operations and readiness during severe conditions.

Supervisors should regularly review this policy with employees to impress upon them the need to report for and remain at work.

**REPORTING TO WORK**
Employees are expected to report to work unless they have been notified by their supervisor of a different plan. Employees are expected to use sound judgment and make every reasonable effort to safely report to work.

Employees should contact their supervisors with any questions or concerns about reporting to work. Employees should not assume that their presence is not needed. Public service announcements indicating a state of emergency and advising workers to stay home do not apply to health care and public safety workers.

**PAY PRACTICES**
For the purposes of this policy, employees will be paid as follows:

**Delayed openings, early dismissals and closures**
If the site / department delays opening, closes early or closes entirely, employees scheduled to work will be paid regular pay for the time the department is closed.

**Employee late arrivals, early dismissals and absences**
An employee who expects to be late reporting to work because of the severity of the conditions should notify his or her manager of the anticipated tardiness. After a review of the circumstances surrounding the employee’s tardiness, and if the employee is not unreasonably late, the manager may exercise discretion in paying the employee for the entire scheduled shift.

If the site / department remains open and the employee asks to leave early or is absent for the scheduled shift, the time out of work will be treated as an unscheduled absence. The employee will either use accrued benefit time or be unpaid.
This policy is intended as a guideline to assist in the consistent application of Brigham and Women’s Hospital policies and programs for employees. The policy does not create a contract implied or expressed, with any hospital employees who are employees at will. The hospital reserves the right to modify this policy in whole or in part, at any time, at its sole discretion.