

Essential Employee Designation

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. Managers in an area where people must report to or remain at work even when the University is closed, 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 performing critical roles in your unit emergency plans, and that they are aware of their status.
- Ensure that each person in this category has the *Essential Service Designation Card* with him or her. This card indicates that the carrier has been designated to perform critical functions at the University and has been given permission by the Chief of Cornell Police to travel on closed roads. These cards will be generated each fall by the Office of Emergency Planning and Recovery from the information submitted by units in their emergency plans.
- Verify that each person who will be needed understands the timing of his/her shift and has an opportunity to discuss any issues or concerns prior to, or during, a severe weather event.

Travel to and from work:

Safety comes first. Many employees live some distance from campus. Each employee should use his or her own best judgment in determining whether it is safe to travel to campus if there are dangerous conditions or unplowed roads.

If a county or municipality announces that you should "avoid unnecessary **Work** travel" but no special operating status has been announced, you 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 (see above). The Chief of Police has worked with the State and surrounding county and local law enforcement agencies to ensure that designated essential employees are allowed to drive on closed roads.

In the unfortunate event that an employee has an accident while driving to or from work they will need to rely on their personal insurance, as they would at other times. There are no exclusions in NYS auto policies that would preclude coverage for travel for essential employees. It is recommended that employees confirm this with their insurance company if they have concerns.