

**RRO Administrative Procedures**

<b>SOP Title:</b>	<b>Emergency Information and Business Continuity Planning for the Human Research Protection Program</b>
<b>Version:</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Effective Date:</b>	<b>12/10/2024</b>

<b>Version History</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
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**Purpose**

The purpose of this SOP is to provide for business continuity planning in the event an emergency situation disrupts normal campus operations.

In order to have a reasonable and responsible sustainability plan and continuation of services, it is the practice of the Office of the Institutional Review Board (OIRB) to comply with the UAB Inclement/Bad Weather Policy (HR Policy 616, <https://secure4.compliancebridge.com/uab/portal/getdoc.php?file=49>) which recognizes that inclement weather or other adverse, non-weather emergency conditions may occasionally be so severe that it becomes necessary to suspend normal operations. These procedures identify: severity levels for emergencies; staff occupying essential and non-essential positions; and requirements for reporting to work for OIRB staff.

OIRB staff are considered “non-essential” (Workgroup A and Weather Group Yellow) unless there is an emergent need for reviews of projects (e.g., approvals for time-sensitive protocols such as research related to a public health emergency), or if campus will be closed for an extended period of time necessitating working off-site. The Associate Vice President for Research Regulatory Oversight, in consultation with the director of the OIRB, will determine the level of operations in the event of inclement weather or an emergency situation.

**Procedures*****Suspensions of normal campus operations***

In the event of an official UAB closure, the OIRB director will communicate pertinent information to staff. This communication will occur via e-mail unless e-mail communications are disrupted, in which case, a call tree will be utilized to inform employees what next steps should be taken. The OIRB director is responsible for maintaining a call tree for this purpose with current contact information for all OIRB staff.

In case of an emergent institutional shutdown or inclement weather and urgent university business, it is extremely important that each staff member consider their own personal situation and the driving conditions in their area.

All OIRB staff have the ability to work remotely and should do so if conditions warrant, including the use of video conferencing for meetings.

***General emergency planning information***

UAB provides response plans for a number of emergencies at <https://www.uab.edu/emergency/responseplans>. OIRB staff should familiarize themselves with these response plans in advance of an emergency. The OIRB director is responsible for maintaining emergency planning information for their office building location(s) and making these materials available to their staff.

### Evacuations

In the event of an emergency situation that requires evacuation, the director and associate/assistant director(s) should take a copy of their building-specific emergency plan to the department's assigned evacuation location for reference and to ensure accountability of all staff.

It is imperative for the safety of all staff that departments participate in emergency evacuation drills organized by the institution.

### Board and committee meeting disruptions

Convened IRB meetings are held via video conference. If a regularly scheduled convened IRB meeting will be disrupted by a planned closure or delayed opening time for campus, the director and chair will make a determination as to whether the meeting will be canceled, rescheduled, or convened via teleconference or videoconference.

Meetings held via teleconference or videoconference must meet all usual requirements for quorum, and all participating members must (i) have received all pertinent material prior to the meeting, and (ii) be able to actively and equally participate in the discussion of all agenda items. Minutes of such meetings must clearly document that these two conditions have been satisfied in addition to the usual regulatory requirements (e.g., attendance, initial and continued presence of a majority of members; actions taken by the board or committee; the vote on such actions; discussion and resolution of controverted issues).<sup>1</sup>

As soon as possible after the announcement of a delayed start or campus closure that will affect a scheduled meeting, the director or designee should contact IRB members via e-mail to inform them of a cancellation or alternative plans for the meeting.

### **Evaluation**

This plan will be periodically reviewed as part of the HRPP's annual program evaluation and will be adjusted as necessary.

### **Education**

Education on this plan will be provided on at least an annual basis at convened IRB meetings, OIRB staff meetings, and via articles in pertinent newsletters.

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<sup>1</sup> IRB Meetings Convened via Telephone Conference Call: OPRR Memorandum (2000). 3/28/2000. <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/guidance/irb-meetings-convened-by-telephone-call/index.html>. Accessed 3/13/2020.