

DHHS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Section V:	Human Resources
Title:	Safety and Benefits
Chapter:	Adverse Weather and Emergency Closings
Current Effective Date:	4/1/04
Revision History:	1/1/04
Original Effective Date:	1/1/04

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance in the event of adverse weather or other emergency situations that may affect the operations of facilities and accounting for employee work time.

Policy

It is the intent of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to adopt as its guiding reference the “Adverse Weather and Emergency Closings Policy” found in Section 5 of the State Personnel Manual.

Implementation

Coverage: This policy applies to all DHHS employees

1. Definitions:
 - A. Adverse weather and other conditions of a serious nature: Conditions that may prohibit some employees from reporting to work but do not necessitate the closing of facilities or curtailing of operations.
 - B. Emergency closing conditions: Conditions that necessitate the closing of a state division/facility/school or the curtailing of operations. Conditions that may be hazardous to life or safety and may warrant closing of state offices include: catastrophic life threatening weather (snow, ice, hurricane, tornado, earthquake, flood or other natural disaster), fire, equipment failure, disruption of power and/or water, contamination by hazardous agents, terrorist acts or forced evacuations from the agency or work site.
 - C. Emergency employees: Employees who are required to work during an emergency because their positions have been designated by their management as mandatory and/or essential to agency operations during an emergency.

- D. Administrative Operation: Defined as all non-twenty-four hour/seven day per week work units.
2. Closing Authorizations:
 - A. DHHS agencies within Wake County:
 1. When emergency closing conditions affect more than one administrative operation and occur during the regular work schedule, the governor or his/her designees shall make the closing decision. Exceptions to this are the Governor Morehead School and Dorothea Dix Hospital.
 2. When emergency closing conditions affect only one (1) DHHS division office or location, the respective division director shall make the closing decision and inform the DHHS Safety/Benefits Section within 48 hours.
 3. When emergency closing conditions affect the Governor Morehead School or Dorothea Dix Hospital, the Office of Education Service's Superintendent and Director of Dorothea Dix Hospital shall make closing decisions and inform the DHHS Safety/Benefits Section within 48 hours.
 - B. DHHS Institution and Division Office Staff located outside the Wake County Area: When closing conditions affect either a division/facility/school, the respective director or division director shall make the closing decision.
3. Reporting:
 - A. DHHS closing decisions shall be reported to the DHHS Employee Safety and Benefits section within 48 hours of the need to close. The affected division/facility/school shall report the reasons for the closure, the time period of closure, the location of closure and the number of affected employees.
 - B. The DHHS Employee Safety and Benefits section shall make all reports of closure to the Office of State Personnel within five (5) days of the closure.
 - C. The division/facility/school human resource manager is responsible for notifying the Division of Human Resources, Safety and Benefits section on closing data as required in the policy.

4. Employee Responsibility:

- A. Non-Emergency (Non-essential employee): It is the responsibility of employees to make a good faith effort to come to work during times that adverse weather or other conditions of a serious nature exist. Employees in this category who anticipate problems in their transportation should be permitted and encouraged to avail themselves of adverse weather privileges.
- B. Emergency (Essential employee): It is recognized that some operations, whether during conditions of a serious nature or emergency conditions must continue to provide service. It is the responsibility of each DHHS division/facility/school director to predetermine and designate their mandatory/essential operations that will remain open. Employees who have been designated in this category must remain and report to work as scheduled or the following may apply:
 - 1. An emergency employee's failure to report to work and remain at work can result in disciplinary action and/or the hours missed to be charged to leave with or without pay, as appropriate.
 - 2. When conditions cause an emergency employee to arrive late, the agency head or designee(s) may determine that the conditions justified the late arrival. In such cases, the lost time will not be charged to the employees leave balances or to leave without pay, and no disciplinary action will be taken.

5. Division/Facility/School Responsibility

Each DHHS division/facility/school director shall develop an Adverse Weather and Emergency Closings Policy with written procedures that are consistent with and incorporate the provisions of this policy and shall include the following points:

- A. Define who has closing authority under their policy;
- B. Outline how employees will be advised of closing/curtailment of operations;
- C. Establish those employees designated as emergency personnel and how they will be notified of such;
- D. Include a statement informing emergency employees when they are required to report or remain at work; and

- E. Define how non-emergency employees may be required to report to work or remain at work under emergency conditions and how they will be notified of such.

6. Accounting for Time

DHHS divisions/facilities/schools shall adhere to the provisions as outlined in the State Personnel Manual, Section 5, “Accounting for Time under the Adverse Weather and Emergency Closings Policy”.

7. Policy Maintenance:

- A. Each division/facility/school shall submit their policy to the DHHS Division of Human Resources/Safety and Benefits Section for review for compliance with state policy.
- B. Division/facility/school policies are to be reviewed annually and any policy changes forwarded as indicated in A. above.

For questions or clarification on any of the information contained in this policy, please contact [Human Resources](#). For general questions about department-wide policies and procedures, contact the [DHHS Policy Coordinator](#).