



CHESTERFIELD COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Department: Human Resources
Subject: Adverse Weather and Emergency Events

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I. INTRODUCTION

This policy establishes responsibilities and prescribes procedures for notifying county employees of Chesterfield County government operations during adverse weather conditions and other emergency events and anytime the county goes to minimum staffing. The intent of this policy is to provide guidance related to the staffing of county departments during adverse weather conditions and emergency events. Release, dismissal, and absence from work during adverse weather conditions are included.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Adverse Weather** – Any weather conditions that might jeopardize the safety of both county employees and the public.
- B. **Designated Staff** – Employees who are required to work when the county is closed, regardless of weather conditions or emergency events.
- C. **Emergency Events** – Any natural or man-made disaster that may jeopardize the health and safety of both county employees and the public.
- D. **Minimum Staffing** – Employees who are required to work upon appointment by the department director in order to respond to customer needs (telephone or face-to-face services determined by the department director).
- E. **Liberal Leave** – Leave taken by an employee following an official announcement that the county is open and liberal leave is in effect. An employee is expected to report to work unless adverse weather conditions prohibit safe travel. The employee shall contact his or her supervisor to advise of the expected report to work time. Any work time missed during a period of liberal leave will be deducted from an employee's paid time off (PTO) or annual leave balance. Liberal leave does not apply to designated or minimum staffing personnel.

III. POLICY

Unless otherwise notified by sources identified under Section VII of this administrative procedure, all personnel are to assume that Chesterfield County will be open each regular work day regardless of any weather or other emergency condition that may develop. Continuity of critical operations/services during adverse weather conditions is essential. Critical operations may include, but are not limited to: Police Department, Fire Department, Emergency Communications, Sheriff's Department, Juvenile Detention, MHSS Residential Services and Utilities emergency operations. Employees whose services are vital to these operations will be required to report to, or remain at, their work sites in emergency situations. In addition to critical activities, departments may also be required to maintain the minimum level of staff needed to provide customer services. Under conditions of adverse weather or emergency events, designated employees and minimum staffing employees may be required to report to work when other county employees are excused. Departments are responsible for maintaining and posting a list of employees responsible for providing minimum staffing. During an adverse weather or emergency event any employee may be classified as designated and required to report to work. These individuals will then be considered designated, and must report to work and will be compensated according to Section XI.

IV. SUMMARY

County status will be provided to employees according to the County Status Options below. If there is no media broadcast or internal communication regarding Chesterfield County status, employees must report to work as usual and expect that all county offices will be open. If county offices are in any status other than a normal opening, that status (e.g., Late Opening at 10:30 a.m., or Early Closing 3 p.m.) will be communicated as outlined in Section VII.B and VII.C.

- A. When county offices operate under ***Closed Designated Staff*** status due to adverse weather or emergency events—designated personnel only will report to work or remain at work as usual.
- B. When county offices operate under ***Open Minimum Staffing*** status due to adverse weather or emergency events—designated employees will report to work or remain at work as usual and employees identified to perform duties under minimum staffing conditions will report to work or remain at work as usual.
- C. When the status of county offices is ***Early Closing Designated Staff*** due to adverse weather or emergency events—designated employees will remain at work as usual.
- D. When the status of county offices is ***Late Opening*** due to adverse weather or emergency events—designated employees will report to work as usual.
- E. When the status of county offices is ***Open Liberal Leave***—designated and minimum staffing personnel will report to work as usual. All other employees are expected to report to work or remain at work as usual unless adverse weather conditions or other emergency events prohibit safe travel.
- F. ***Special Circumstances*** – Special circumstances relating to employees who are otherwise absent or late on days when adverse weather or emergency events affect county operations are covered under Section VIII, Special Instructions, of this administrative procedure.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The county administrator is responsible for making decisions regarding county operations under adverse weather and emergency event conditions.
- B. The chief of police, through the shift commander, is responsible for advising the county administrator when weather conditions or emergency events may negatively impact county operations.
- C. Department directors are responsible for:
 - 1. The selection of designated staff and minimum staffing employees. (These employees will be notified of their status and their related responsibilities regarding adverse weather, and this notification will be given in advance in writing by the department director.)
 - 2. Coordinating early closing with the county administrator to avoid confusion and promote equitable treatment of all employees.
 - 3. Ensuring that department coverage is sufficient to handle telephone or face-to-face customer service requirements during minimum staffing. (If face-to-face services are provided during normal operations, a minimal level of like services should be available under minimum staffing.) Departments with interrelated services should preplan coordination of services during adverse weather conditions.
- D. All employees are responsible for obtaining information regarding county operations during non-duty hours by listening to any of the Public Broadcasting Systems listed in Section VII.B of this policy or calling the weather line at 748-1256. See Section VII - Notification. ***Employees should not call the county administrator's office or any emergency communications numbers.***

VI. PROCEDURES

The Police Shift Commander will notify the county administrator when adverse weather conditions or emergency events may adversely impact county government operations, as well as public and employee safety, based on Emergency Communications Center information gathered from road condition reports from the Police Department and the current weather forecast from the National Weather Service or other appropriate sources. The decision to effect early closing, late opening or closure will be made by the county administrator. Department directors will not affect closure or reduce operations without approval of the county administrator. Any decision affecting hours of operation will be communicated as indicated below in Section VII.

VII. NOTIFICATION

- A. During normal working hours, the county administrator will notify Human Resources when adverse weather conditions or emergency events affect county operations and will advise of the type of closure, effective time and staffing requirements.

Human Resources will contact department directors by internal email broadcast message and individual calls to departments without internal email. Emergency Communications will activate the County Administrative group test. Department directors will notify their respective employees of the change in county and departmental operations.

- B. During non-operational hours, the police watch commander will notify the county administrator of adverse weather and road conditions by 5 a.m. The county administrator will make a decision regarding the status and staffing of county operations by 5:15 a.m. and advise the police watch commander. The county administrator and chief judge of the Circuit Court should confer on adverse weather conditions and office closings. When county offices are closed or at the direction of the county administrator, Communications and Media will record the operational status message on the county employee weather line, post the message on social media, generate a countywide email, create a broadcast voicemail message, notify Chesterfield Alert and notify the following media to provide broadcast of the appropriate information.

Television: WTVR-TV 6; WRIC-TV 8; WWBT-TV 12

Radio: WRVA - 1140 AM

VIII. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

- A. When the county administrator decides during non-operational hours that the status of county operations will be either ***Closed Designated Staff*** or ***Open Minimum Staffing***, the employees' status will be determined as follows:
1. If county operations are being fully closed (***Closed Designated Staff***), employees who are not designated will be excused from work, and full-time excused employees will not be charged leave or lose pay. Designated staffing employees who do not report to work during closed designated staffing status will be charged leave and may be disciplined.
 2. If county operations will be ***Open Minimum Staffing***, designated and minimum staffing employees must report to work and all other employees will be excused from work, and full-time excused employees will not be charged leave or lose pay. Designated and minimum staffing employees who do not report to work during minimum staffing status will be charged leave and may be disciplined.
 3. When county offices are closed due to adverse weather, part-time employees who do not work any of their scheduled shift will receive no compensation for the closure day.
- B. When the decision is made during operational hours to close early, the employees' status will be determined as follows:

1. If the county operations are being fully closed (*Early Closing Designated Staff*), designated staff will remain on duty and full-time and part-time employees who are not designated will be allowed to leave work with no charge to leave or loss of pay for the remaining hours of work following closure.
 2. If county operations are open with minimum staffing (*Early Closing Minimum Staffing*), designated and minimum staffing employees must remain on duty and full-time and part-time employees will be allowed to leave with no charge to leave or loss of pay for the remaining hours of work following closure. Only those employees designated as minimum staffing will receive PTO or annual leave credits
- C. When the decision is made during non-operational hours to delay the opening of county offices, designated employees will report for normal hours and all other full-time employees will be excused without charge to leave or loss of pay until the county offices are scheduled to open. Part-time employees who are scheduled to work but are unable to work because of a late opening of county offices due to adverse weather will be paid for their entire shift provided they report to work at the designated opening time.
- If a late opening is in effect and an employee reports later than the late opening time, the employee will be charged leave for the time between the late opening time and the time the employee actually reports for duty.
- D. If an employee elects not to report to work or remain at work due to adverse weather conditions when county offices are in *Open Liberal Leave* status, he/she will be charged PTO or annual leave or other paid leave (except sick leave) for the time period in which county offices are open. When county offices are open and in Liberal Leave status, employees who work a flexible work schedule should report to work at their normal start time. If the employee elects to use Liberal Leave, the leave taken should reflect the employees normal flex schedule.
- E. If an employee was absent on approved leave for the entire work shift, the entire absence is charged to appropriate leave (i.e., PTO or annual, sick or leave without pay).
- F. Employees who report to work prior to the late opening of the county offices will not be entitled to any additional compensation.
- G. In the event that county offices are closed due to adverse weather or emergency event, non-designated and non-minimum staffing employees who work a flexible schedule (instead of the standard 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. schedule) will be paid a maximum of eight hours for the closure day. For example, if the flex employee usually works 10 hours on Monday and the county is closed on Monday due to adverse weather, the employee would take two hours of PTO or annual leave or work two additional hours later in the week.
- H. For departments that are open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., in the event that the opening of county offices is delayed due to adverse weather, non-designated staff that work flexible schedules will revert back to the standard county work schedule of 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. For example, if the employee's flexible schedule is from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and the county offices open at 10 a.m., the employee would report for work from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. If the employee leaves earlier than 5 p.m., the difference in hours can be made up during the remainder of the workweek or by using PTO or annual leave.
- I. When adverse weather conditions or emergency events develop over the weekend and/or after 5 p.m. and before midnight, and thereby affect non-essential services that operate during these hours, the responsible deputy county administrator or designee will make the decision regarding operational status of these departments.
- J. When adverse weather conditions or emergency events result in a late opening or early closing, the announcement shall be made by including a specific time for opening or closing, not by a duration of time (e.g., Late opening at 10:30 would be announced, not Late opening two-hour

delay). This avoids confusion for employees working flexible time shifts. These employees should begin their shift at the announced opening time.

- K. The County is in Liberal Leave status when county schools are closed due to adverse weather. Under these circumstances Liberal Leave may be taken to handle critical family obligations.

IX. PLANNING AND SAFE TRAVEL TO WORK

- A. Safety of employees and the public is a primary concern during adverse weather conditions or other emergency events. It is the responsibility of each employee to arrive to work on time and in the safest way possible.
- B. Designated and minimum staffing employees are responsible for ensuring that they are at work for their scheduled shifts and should make arrangements in advance to ensure they will be at work on time and arrive in the safest way possible.
- C. Department directors should encourage advance planning for designated and minimum staffing employees to facilitate their safe travel to and from work during adverse weather.

X. COURTS BUILDING PROCEDURES

County employees working in the Circuit Court Clerk's Office, the Commonwealth Attorney's Office, Circuit Court, General District Court, and Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court will follow adverse weather procedures outlined by the chief judge of the circuit court.

XI. COMPENSATION

- A. In addition to their regular pay, all designated and minimum staffing employees who are required to work, and do work during periods when county offices are closed or operating under Minimum Staffing, due to adverse weather or emergency event conditions will be compensated with PTO or annual leave (PTL for part time employees) at the rate of one hour per hour worked up to a maximum of eight hours. This compensation will not be effective for periods of 2 hours or less. See adverse weather compensation examples in the Appendix.
- B. Additional PTO, annual or PTL leave will be given to all designated and minimum staffing employees required to work within the 24-hour day of closure and only when the number of hours county offices are closed or operating under minimum staffing exceeds two hours. The 24-hour day will be from 12 a.m. through 12:00 midnight of the day county offices are closed.
- C. Only designated and minimum staffing employees will receive PTO or annual leave credits for working during periods when county offices are closed or operating under Minimum Staffing.
- D. Adverse weather hours earned must be entered on an employee's timesheet through the time reporting system using the ACCRADV code and approved by the supervisor. Once processed in payroll, the hours will be added to the employee's PTO or annual leave balance. The ACCRADV code will be activated on employee timecards only when applicable.
- E. The county administrator may authorize the payment of straight time pay or flat rate pay to exempt employees performing work in excess of their regularly scheduled hours to support an Emergency Operation Plan event.

XII. NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TRAINING

All current full-time and part-time benefits eligible employees are required to complete IS 100 and IS 700 courses, or their equivalent, as scheduled by the Emergency Preparedness Steering Committee. New employees must complete these courses within 90 days of hire. These courses are available in the Learning & Performance Center classroom and as an online course.

Appendix

Adverse Weather Compensation Scenarios

Scenario 1: Due to adverse weather, county offices open at 10:30 a.m. Designated employees must report at their regular time.

Compensation: Because county offices are closed two hours or less, there is no additional compensation.

Scenario 2: County offices are open at 8:30 a.m. minimum staffing. Designated and minimum-staffing employees must report at their regular time. Other employees report at 10 a.m.

Compensation: Because the minimum staff period is two hours or less (1.5 hours), there is no additional compensation for designated and minimum staffing employees.

Scenario 3: County offices are open at 8:30 a.m. liberal leave. Designated and minimum-staffing employees must report at their regular time. All other employees are expected to report to work at their regular time unless adverse weather conditions prohibit safe travel.

Compensation: Because county offices are not closed and there is no late opening for non-designated and non-minimum staffing employees, there is no additional compensation.

Scenario 4: County offices are closed until 11 a.m. Designated employees must report to work at their regular time.

Compensation: Because county offices are closed more than two hours (2.5 hours), Designated employees that work the day of the closing will receive up to 2.5 hours of PTO or annual leave.

Scenario 5: County offices are closed an entire workday. Designated employees must report to work at their regular time.

Compensation: Because county offices are closed eight hours, Designated employees that work the day of the closing may receive up to eight hours of PTO or annual leave. For example, a Designated plant operator that starts his/her shift at 8 p.m. the day of the closing would receive four hours of PTO or annual leave (8 p.m. -12 midnight). A Designated group home counselor that starts his/her shift the evening before the closing day and works until 7 a.m. the day of the closing would receive seven hours of PTO or annual leave (12 midnight – 7 a.m.). A Designated youth counselor that starts his/her shift at 8 a.m. the day of the closing would receive eight hours of PTO or annual leave (8 a.m. – 4:30 pm).