Cancels: Inclement Weather and Emergency Office Closures, dated January 3, 2001

PO01 - 035 INCLEMENT WEATHER AND EMERGENCY OFFICE CLOSURES

DISCUSSION

From time to time, unforeseen circumstances, such as snowstorms or power failures, make it difficult for employees to get to work and may require the closure of a department office or work site. This policy provides guidance for managers and employees regarding what employees should do and how they should account for their time when the office or work site is inaccessible or closed because of inclement weather or other emergency.

WHO MUST FOLLOW THIS POLICY?

The Master Agreements (union contracts) provide guidance for DNR positions that are covered by the agreements, and these positions are NOT covered by this policy except for the section on Office Closure.

All other positions in the DNR are subject to the provisions of this policy.

POLICY

When the Office Remains Open

In Cases of Inclement Weather or other Emergency When the Office or Work Site Remains Open and the Employee:

- Reports to Work Late

  An employee may, with no impact on pay, be up to one hour late arriving at work because of severe inclement weather. Tardiness beyond one hour requires use of authorized leave.

- Is Unable to Report to Work

  If the employee is absent all day, authorized leave for the entire day is required for the day to be considered an authorized absence.

- Needs to Leave Work Early

  If the employee leaves work early in anticipation of or because of bad weather, authorized leave is required for the absence to be considered excused.

With approval of their supervisor, employees may adjust their work schedule to accommodate inclement weather or other emergency situations.

To account for tardiness beyond one hour or for an absence of an entire day, the employee must take and exhaust accrued paid leave, in the following order:

1. Any earned compensatory time, or exchange time;
2. Any accrued vacation leave;
3. Accrued sick leave (up to three days in a calendar year).

As necessary and otherwise at the discretion of the employee, the employee shall be authorized leave without pay rather than paid leave.

Office Closure

The responsibility for closing any DNR office rests with the Commissioner of Public Lands or the Commissioner's designee. When a Division/Region Manager believes an office or work site should be closed he/she should provide the following information to the Commissioner:

- Safety or health problems that could result from employees staying at work (e.g., power outages, flooding, etc.);
- Safety or health problems that could result from employees leaving work (e.g., snow bound on roads, rock slides, etc.);
- When applicable, the anticipated duration of the problem (e.g. when power is expected to be restored, when roads will be cleared, etc.);
- Whether telephones computers, and other critical equipment are still operational;

- Feasibility of employees continuing to work, either at current or other locations.

If telephone service is intact, supervisors must keep enough staff at the office to answer calls during normal business hours, unless there is a critical safety or health hazard.

Office Closure and Working at an Alternative Work Site

If the office or work site is closed due to inclement weather, or in other emergency situations, the Region or Division Manager can direct an employee to work at an alternative work site, or at home.

Alternative work site assignments should, whenever possible, be to a location with the necessary tools, communications and technology to enable the employee to continue productive work.

As a last resort, an employee may be directed to be available during scheduled work hours at an alternative work site, such as the employee's home, where they would be available to receive further direction.

When an office is closed and with the approval of the supervisor, employees may elect to use authorized leave or to adjust their work schedule. In the case of overtime-eligible employees, such adjustments must be made within the authorized 40-hour workweek.

Office Closure and Employee Pay in the Event of Prolonged Emergencies

This section applies to employees who are sent home and directed to be available during scheduled work hours to receive further direction.

Employees who are not needed to remain at the work site to respond to an emergency should be sent home and instructed to remain available to receive further direction during scheduled work hours. Permanent state employees who are prevented from working because their work location is closed or partially closed may, with seven calendar days' notice, be temporarily laid off under the provisions of WAC 357-46-063. Non-permanent employees will be paid until they have received one day's notice that their non-permanent employment is ended. Exempt employees will be paid until they receive notice that their exempt employment is ended. On call non-permanent employees will not be scheduled for work.

There is no authority to provide extra compensation for employees who work their normal hours during a work disruption. Employees on authorized leave during an office closure shall remain on the authorized leave.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Human Resources Division Manager, in consultation with the Executive Directors and Stewards, is responsible for the uniform interpretation and application of this policy. Division and Region Managers are responsible to ensure employee compliance with this policy.

Approval Date: 09/25/06 **Approved By:** /S/

BONNIE B. BUNNING
Executive Director of
Policy and Administration

SEE ALSO

WAC 357-31-265 – What is the effect of suspended operations on employees who are not required to work during the closure?
WAC 357-31-270 – When an employer has suspended operations, how are employees who are required to work during the closure affected?
WAC 357-31-275 – What must be included in the employer's suspended operations procedure?
WAC 357-31-280 – How long can operations be suspended?
Article 16, Severe Inclement Weather & Natural Disaster Leave, 2005-2007 WFSE Master Collective Bargaining Agreement
Article 14, Non-Operational Worksites/Inability to Report to Work, 2005-2007 WPEA Master Collective Bargaining Agreement